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Tracts
Vol. I.



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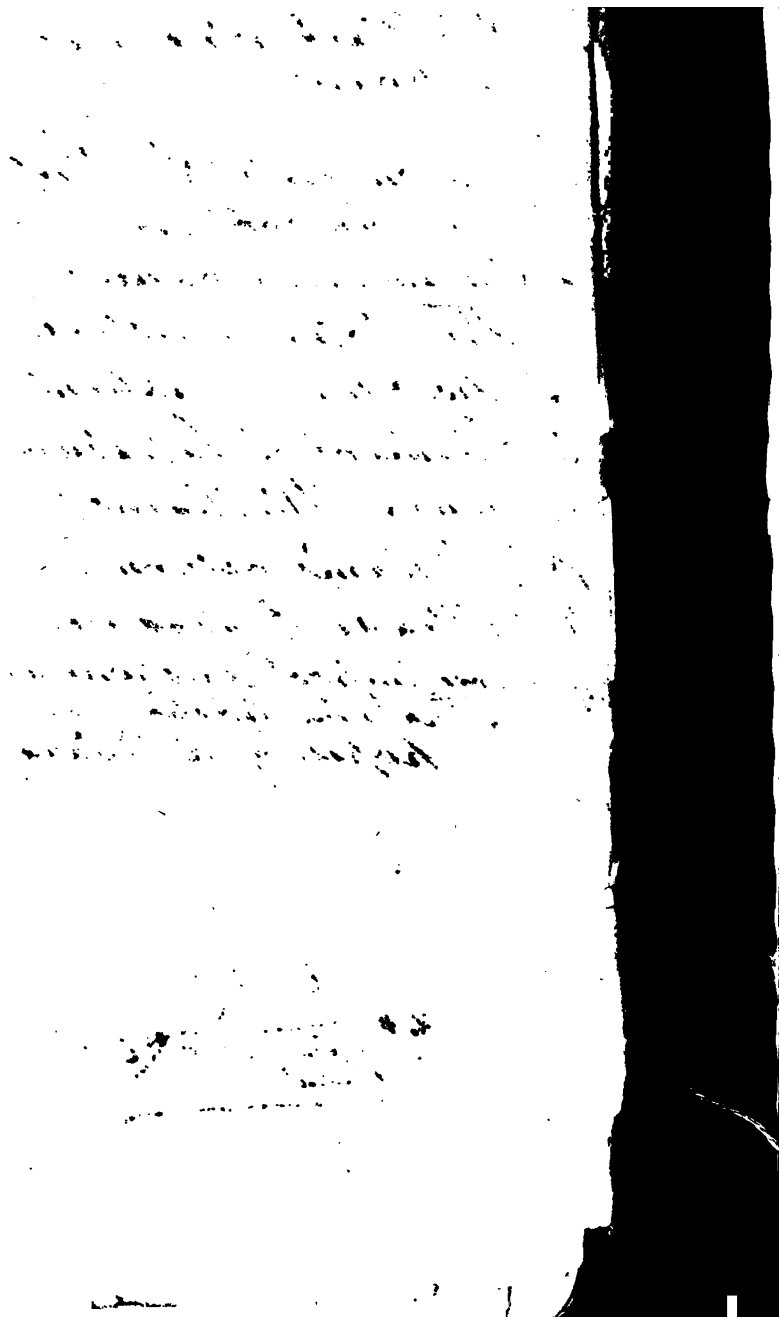
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THE

TWIN BROTHERS;

OR

GOOD LUCK AND GOOD CONDUCT.

BY MARY HUGHES.

PHILADELPHIA:

PRINTED FOR THE TRACT AND BOOK SOCIETY OF THE
SOM VANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF ST. JOHN.

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1819.

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appeared easy, but did not grow like his brother, and in a few months it was perceived that his spine had been injured, for his right shoulder became larger than the other, and it was evident that poor Charles would be much deformed.

This ought to have doubled the care and tenderness of every one about him: but with these unfeeling people it had a contrary effect; for while Robert was caressed and made the plaything of the family, he was neglected: and had not He who "careth for every thing that he hath made" given him a naturally good constitution, the little innocent must have fallen an early victim to their cruelty: even his mother would lament over what she called his hump-back, and agree with the people of the house that his death would be a blessing to her and to himself.

As the children grew older, it appeared that both had good capacities; nor did any marks of evil dispositions show themselves in either, except that Robert, who was remarkable for his beauty and liveliness, would sometimes triumph in the superiority he felt over his brother in their childish sports. The great partiality of those about him soon however made him conceited and selfish, and by degrees he took pleasure in making a jest and a drudge of Charles, who showed a disposition so gentle and affectionate that nothing less hard than the hearts of this family could have resisted it.

As soon as the boys were of an age to work, their mother took them to her master; and he gave them at first more than made up for the loss of the parish allowance, promising to increase their wages as they became more useful to him. Charles was still unable to keep pace with his brother, for his health suffered much from the bad air and confinement of the work-rooms; he was often obliged to stay at home on account of illness, for which his mother severely reproached him; but he bore her unkindness p

ly, and was content to wear his old clothes while Robert had new ones, saying that as he could not get so much money he must be satisfied to spend less.

Fortunately for the boys, who had never enjoyed the means of instruction and education, their master subscribed largely to a school, which they were required to attend, on the Lord's day. Charles took great delight in it; no pleasure or amusement, and hardly illness itself, could prevent him from attending; but Robert was idle, and preferred a walk into the country, or even to ramble about the streets; and being encouraged by his foolish mother to do whatever gave him most pleasure, without regarding the consequences, he scarce learned to read, while his brother was getting forward in writing and accounts.

During the first years of their attendance upon this school, a lady who lived within the distance of a few streets came as regularly to teach as if she had been hired for the purpose. She was a woman of good understanding and a truly Christian disposition, and clearly saw the happy opportunity which these seminaries afford, of implanting the principles of rectitude and a sense of early piety in the hearts of the rising generation, before they are contaminated by a long association with a world, where, I grieve to own, though we call ourselves Christians, vice and profaneness present their hateful forms on every side. She diligently strove to make the children acquainted with the meaning of what they read, and to feel that the precepts which they repeated were addressed to themselves, and intended for the regulation of their daily conduct. Some were giddy and impatient, and profited little by what she said; but her manners was so mild and gentle that they all loved her, and a few were materially benefited by her instructions. Amongst these was Charles, who withstood himself to her from the first time that she

noticed him: he was so little used to affectionate treatment at home, that her kindness won his heart; he never felt so happy as when she was talking to him, and endeavoured carefully to treasure up every word that she said.

When he began to read the Gospels, she pointed out to him in the plainest and most impressive manner the purpose for which God sent his beloved Son into the world; that he came to live and die and rise again for us, to save us by turning every one of us from our iniquities, and to set us a perfect example of conduct, which it ought to be the great aim of his followers to imitate, in every thought, word, and action of their lives.

These instructions on the mind of Charles were like "good seed sown on good ground," they brought forth abundantly: while at work he continually called to mind his Sunday lessons, and soon began to apply them in his daily practice. When he was treated harshly, he remembered his meek and lowly Master, resolving when reviled not to revile again: when any pains or difficulties lay in the way of what he thought his duty, he recollected that he was a disciple of him who even "endured the cross, despising the shame," and that we must be prepared to suffer, if we hope to reign with our beloved Lord. Robert shared in these precious lessons, but, like the seed in the parable which fell among thorns, after hearing the word, the amusements of the evening or the business of the following day so entirely put it out of his mind, that it had little or no influence upon his heart and conduct.

Before the boys had reached their thirteenth year, this good and valuable instructor was, to the unspeakable loss and sorrow of Charles, taken from this changeable world, where she had always considered herself as a stranger and a pilgrim, jer- ing to that blessed rest for which she trusted

labours for the benefit of her fellow-travellers would assist in preparing her. Charles inquired the time of her funeral, and gave up a day's work to follow his dear benefactress to her last earthly abode. When the solemn service was over, and all but himself departed, he shed many tears upon the spot where she was laid, and clasping his hands together; "O my first and dearest friend," he cried, "you do not know or see my grief. Why, why have you left me behind in a wide friendless world! Who will now be my guide and comforter!" He wept bitterly for some minutes, when happening to lay his hand upon his Testament, which was as usual in his pocket, he took it out, and fondly pressing it to his bosom; "This was your precious gift," said he, "and you said,—yes, I well remember your words,—‘Let this be your guide and comforter through life, it will instruct you in difficulties, and cheer you in distresses.’ Henceforth then it shall supply your place; I will apply to it as my friend and teacher, and trust that it will at length conduct me to that happy place where we shall meet again, and death will have no more power to part us."

His heart felt lighter, but he wept more than before, and lingered near the grave till the approach of night reminded him of his home, towards which he walked slowly, resolving often to revisit the spot which contained all that was dearest to him upon earth.

A few weeks after this time, as the boys were one evening returning from work, they agreed to go through some fields near the town. Robert, as usual, out-ran his brother, and by the side of the path, nearly covered with long grass, spied a morocco pocket-book, which he picked up, and on opening found full of papers of various kinds which he was unable to decipher. As there were many people within sight, he resolved to avoid being questioned

about his prize, and running back to Charles begged him to go with him home immediately; he would answer no questions upon the road, but as soon as they got into their own little room produced the pocket-book, of the value of which his brother was a much better judge than himself: and valuable indeed they found it, for it contained a bank note for five hundred pounds, two more of a hundred each, and many other papers, amongst which were several letters directed to Mr. Hammond, one of the principal merchants and bankers in the City.

Both the boys of course concluded that the pocket-book belonged to him; and Charles advised his brother to wait till their mother came home, and then lose no time in restoring it to him. "I don't know whether I shall restore it at all," cried Robert; "as good luck has sent me a fortune, I think common sense should teach me to keep it."

"But what does common honesty say to that?" replied Charles, "could you feel easy while you were living upon another person's money?"

"Yes, very easy and very happy," returned Robert. "I did not steal it, nor get it in any dishonest way, nor do I certainly know whose it is; so I think I cannot do better than keep it, and make the best of it for my own pleasure and advantage."

"Dear Robert!" cried Charles, "think what you are about; if you cannot find the owner of this money, it will then become honestly your own; but if you keep it without having used every possible means to do that, it will be the very same as if you had stolen it."

"But who will know any thing of the matter?" said Robert.

"God will know it," interrupted Charles with much solemnity. "His eye is upon us at this moment, and he marks every thing that we say and do! O my dear brother, resist the terrible temptation

you are now under, do not begin a life of dishonesty, you know the dreadful end to which it leads!"

"I never intend to turn thief," replied Robert; "but this money will be the making of me, it will put me into business, and when I am grown rich I can at any time send back the same sum to Mr. Hammond, and I faithfully promise that I will do so, and that I hope will satisfy you."

"No, no," cried Charles; "how can you expect that God will prosper ill-gotten wealth? and even if he should suffer it to increase, the owner may die, or you may die before it is restored, and the sin will lie upon your soul for ever!"

Robert was silent, and seemed wavering, when their mother came in, and, shocking to relate, took his side of the question. "You are in the right, my dear boy," she said; "do not throw away your good fortune. Mr. Hammond is a rich man and will never miss the money, it is no more to him than a shilling would be to us, and nobody can say you have got it dishonestly."

"But if he keeps it from the right owner," cried Charles, "it will be as dishonest an action as if he had stolen it, and the Almighty will punish it equally as a great sin!"

"None of your preaching," interrupted his mother; "how dare you pretend to lay down laws, and direct your brother and me how we are to act? But I know your motives, you are envious of him for being taller and handsomer than yourself; and because this great sum of money will set him still more above you, you want him to seek out somebody to give it to: but if he parts with a guinea of it I shall call him a fool, and say he deserves no more good luck of any kind while he lives."

Charles burst into tears. "Indeed you wrong me, mother," cried he; "I wish my brother to be happy in this world and the next, and therefore would

persuade him to be strictly honest, without which we can neither gain the favour of God nor man."

"Let me hear no more of this," replied she; "seven hundred pounds will be the making of our fortunes, and I insist upon your never mentioning the matter to any living soul."

Charles now remained silent, and this wicked woman went on, contriving with her favourite how they should dispose of the money to most advantage, and how they would live when he was grown up and become rich. Charles sometimes tried to put in a few words, but was always stopped with threats and reproaches.

When he went to bed at night he could not sleep, the guilty schemes of his mother and brother lay like a weight of lead upon his heart. He almost despaired of being able to persuade them to act honestly, and began to consider within himself whether it was not his duty to oblige them to restore what he well knew it would be a crime to keep. The struggle was great between the natural gentleness of his disposition and his strong desire to act right, and he lay awake the whole night debating and considering what he ought to do. He recollected many passages of Scripture which call upon us for a strict performance of duty, though at the price of all that this world can give; and in particular our beloved Saviour's words, "He who loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me!" Young as he was, he plainly perceived that he could be no follower of Christ if he did not ardently endeavour to act right in every instance, and he well knew that to suffer dishonesty in another was the same as committing it himself.

As soon as it grew light in the morning he got up, and, kneeling by the side of his bed, besought the Almighty to direct him in the part he ought to act. He arose, assured that his prayer was heard and answered; his mind became stronger and more at

case, and he was fully resolved that Mr. Hammond's property should not be withheld if it was in his power to prevent it.

Robert and his mother too were up betimes, but had no thoughts of work that day. Charles, however, was told that he might go as usual, for his brother's good luck did not at all concern him. "I hope still to persuade you, my dear mother," cried he, "to go with Robert to Mr. Hammond this morning to restore the pocket-book and its contents. No doubt he will reward you handsomely; and, what is a thousand times more than all that he can bestow, it will bring the blessing of God upon us, he will prosper what we do, and send that comfort and peace of mind which no riches can ensure."

"Attend to what I now say," cried his mother, laying her hand roughly upon his arm; "your brother shall not throw away what good luck has sent him; and if ever you hope to be a shilling the better for it, say not a single word more upon the subject. A pretty jest, indeed, to talk of what Mr. Hammond would give him for his honesty! a couple of guineas perhaps, or five at the utmost! No, no; we will make the best of what we have; your brother is a fine clever lad, and I plainly see was born to be a gentleman: as for you, who are fit for nothing but a drudge; you may leave us if you like it, and get your bread as honestly as you please."

Here both Susan and her favourite burst into a laugh: the colour came into Charles's cheeks and the tears into his eyes at the same moment, and he answered; "The bread of honesty is always sweet, and I am most thankful to God that he enables me to earn it:—but pardon me, my mother, when I say that I cannot suffer my brother to keep what I know belongs to another person. If he will not restore it ^{my} myself, I will go to Mr. Hammond and let him know where his property is."

This declaration put Susan into a violent passion; she used the most threatening language and even blows to intimidate him, and shake his resolution: but Charles, without returning one harsh expression, declared that, believing it to be his duty, nothing should prevent him from doing as he had said.

Observing his inflexible steadiness, his mother artfully resolved to change her plan, and try if she could not melt him by kindness. She accordingly altered her tone of voice; and gently taking his hand, "My dear child," said she, "forgive me for having been so violent, and using you so cruelly: I know that you have intended well in all that you have said; but remember that you are young and unused to the world; I have lived many years in it, and know the value of money too well to throw away so large a sum when luck has put it honestly into our hands. Do not think from what you have heard that we shall keep it to ourselves; no, we love you dearly, and you shall share it to the last guinea."

"That you shall," said Robert, who instantly entered into his mother's scheme; "it shall be as much yours as mine, and it will be the making of us both."

He then threw his arms about Charles with such appearance of affection, that the tender-hearted boy, who had been little used to kindness from him, burst into tears.

His mother, now hoping to carry her point without much difficulty, went on to tell him how many advantages would arise from the possession of such a sum of money; mingling her discourse with caresses so tender, and looks so affectionate, that he found the struggle hard indeed between his wish to make her and his brother happy, and his strong sense of duty to God. A little consideration, however, settled his mind; his melting heart recovered firmness, and wiping away the tears, "I can ne

make you or myself happy," said he, "by doing a dishonest action; sooner or later I know it must bring disgrace and punishment upon us. I am still a child, and feel myself unable to say half what I ought on the occasion; but I know that we are forbidden to use what belongs to another, and that no blessing from God will follow us, while it is in our hands."

"True," interrupted Susan, "we should certainly be strictly honest; and so we mean to be, for we only intend to keep the money for a few years, and I think it was sent to us for a good purpose, for we shall be able to make a neat and creditable appearance, and I will go with you twice every Sunday to the public worship of God, and learn my duty from the fine minister of whom you talk so often; but if we lose this golden opportunity of setting ourselves above the world, I shall never be better than I have been, and we shall go on toiling for bread all our lives."

"And remember," said Robert, "that I promise to take every shilling back to Mr. Hammond the very first moment we can spare it."

Poor Charles began again to sob: "Do not strive to mislead me," cried he; "we must not do evil that good may come! O my mother, do not seek to entice me from the path that leads to Heaven!"

Here Susan lost all patience; and looking sternly in his face, "I now tell you," said she, "that you have a serious choice to make: if you will conceal this matter you shall share in all our gains and advantages; but if you still persist in opposing my will, and resolving to ruin us, you shall quit this house to-day and provide for yourself how you can, nor will I or your brother ever own or assist you, though, sickly and deformed as you are, you should lie at our door wanting a bit of bread."

The wickedness and cruelty of this speech roused Charles; and rising up, "I clearly see," said he,

"what I ought to do, and no terrors shall stop me!" Then falling on his knees: "O thou Father and Protector of all who put their trust in thee," he cried, "when my mother and my brother forsake me, Thou, I know, wilt take me up, and I pray thee to pardon them and turn their hearts!"

Susan could not help being in some degree affected, and Robert's eyes filled with tears; but hoping still to get the better, she bade Charles gather his clothes together, and prepare for his departure. "Let him stay another day, dear mother," said Robert; "perhaps he will think better of it, and do as we wish."

"No no," cried Charles, "I will go this morning to Mr. Hammond; justice shall be done, whatever becomes of me."

Susan and Robert sat silently watching him while he packed up his few clothes and books, all of which could easily be carried away in one bundle. When this was done he went timidly up to his mother, but she pushed him from her, bidding him instantly leave the house: he obeyed her, only stopping a minute at the door of the room to repeat his prayer for their pardon and conversion.

He went down stairs with a heavy heart, resolving to go to Mr. Hammond, before he even considered in what place he should shelter his own friendless head; but had scarce gone ten paces from the street door, when his mother called to him from the window, telling him to come back. He gladly and speedily obeyed the summons, hoping that she had relented; but when he entered the room with a look of eager inquiry, she thus addressed him: "We are a little too cunning to be taken in by such a child as you; if any one goes to Mr. Hammond, it shall be your brother himself; surely he who found the money ought to have the reward for bringing it back. I will take him to do so myself, and do you stay

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in order to gain the favour of that gentleman. But this falsehood was like most others quite useless; for he was of too generous a disposition to have exposed the faults of his mother and brother, let the prospect of advantage to himself have been ever so tempting.

After inquiring Robert's age, Mr. Hammond proposed sending him to a good day-school for a year, at the end of which time he said he should see what improvements he had made, and what further he was fit for, promising to put him into an advantageous line of business if he was diligent, and continued to deserve his favour.

Susan poured out a profusion of thanks, and assured him that no mother had ever been blessed with so pious, gentle, industrious, and dutiful a son, as Robert had always been to her; and she did not doubt but with the favour of Heaven he would give equal satisfaction to any gentleman who should be pleased to employ him. All this she might have said with truth of the poor neglected Charles, for he had on every occasion done all in his small power to promote her welfare and happiness; but excessive indulgence had rendered Robert selfish and obstinate, and the constant preference given him over his brother made him conceited and ill-natured. But this unjust mother could neither see a fault in her darling, nor a virtue in Charles, who was born, she would often declare, to be a misery to himself, and a burden and trouble to his friends.

Before Mr. Hammond dismissed them, he put a twenty-pound note into Susan's hand, desiring her to keep her son frugally, but decently clothed, and take care that he attended the school regularly. She again loaded him with thanks; and they returned home highly delighted, as indeed they had reason to be, with the bright prospect which seemed to open before Robert.

Poor Charles had been long standing at the window watching impatiently for their return, and was not a little cheered by seeing them appear in high spirits as they walked down the street; nay, Robert even looked up and gave him a good-humoured nod. He would have gone down to meet them, but was afraid of the reception his mother might give him: he looked wishfully at both when they entered the room, but did not venture to speak. Good fortune had, however, for the present softened the heart of Susan, or rather she was impatient to communicate and boast of the happy change in Robert's situation; she therefore related the greatest part of what had passed, and concluded with telling him that he might unpack his bundle and remain with them, unless he rather chose to go and provide for himself. "Thank you, my dear mother," said Charles, "I would far rather stay with you and my brother than go to live with strangers, and I hope the noble reward he is likely to receive for acting honestly will fix him firmly in the path of rectitude for the remainder of his life."

"Let me warn you once for all," interrupted Susan, "to give us no more of your preaching; your brother and I shall know upon other occasions how to act for our own advantage as much as we have upon this."

"Nay, mother," cried Robert, "we should not have taken back the pocket-book but for Charles's advice; so we ought to thank him for that."

"Not at all," answered she; "it is your good luck not his kind intentions that we have to thank; it was undutiful and ill-natured in him to force me to do what I did not like; but you, my darling, were born to rise in the world, and so every thing turns out for the best."

The favourite was not disposed to contradict this edifying assertion, and Charles according to his

usual custom became silent when his mother grew harsh and unreasonable.

Robert was sent the following day to the school which Mr. Hammond mentioned; and as that gentleman, who was really much taken with the boy, occasionally sent for and examined him as to the progress he made, his ambition and vanity were so completely roused, that he became as diligent as he had before been idle; and as he had an excellent capacity he got on rapidly, and at the end of the year his kind benefactor was so highly pleased with his attainments, and had so good an opinion of his disposition and principles, that he again sent for his mother, and told her he would take the entire care of providing for her son upon himself; that he would board him at a school where he would be qualified for business, and defray all his expenses till he was of an age to be employed in his counting-house, when he would give him a salary and put him forward in the world if he continued to deserve it.

It may well be imagined that Susan was delighted with this good news: she hastened to communicate it to her son, in whom she already thought she saw a rich merchant. "O my darling boy," cried she, embracing him, "you are to go next week to the great school in Mill-street, among all the rich people's sons; Mr. Hammond is to pay for every thing, and you will appear as well as the best of them! What a fine thing it is to have luck! I shall one day see you riding in your own coach, while Charles goes plodding on between his work and his prayers, and will be a poor shabby fellow all his life."

"I am more glad than ever," returned Robert, "that we never said any thing of him to Mr. Hammond; not one of my school-fellows must know that I have such a brother; for though he is neat in his dress considering his employment, and really well-behaved for one who has had no education, his ug-

is so remarkable that I beg you will never let him come to call upon me at my new place of abode."

"That you may be sure I never will," replied she. "I find it ~~is~~ thought troublesome at these great schools for the friends of the children to visit them; But Mr. Hammond told me that you would dine with him every Sunday, and that you should call upon me in the evening; so I must be content to see you only once in a week."

Robert inwardly rejoiced to hear this; for his heart now began to be so filled with pride, that he was ashamed to own even his doting mother, and hoped to be considered by his new friends as entirely under the care of Mr. Hammond. Little did the short-sighted Susan think, when she encouraged him to despise and look down upon his brother, that she was teaching him a lesson against herself! But when bad and unnatural dispositions once take possession of the heart, they may be expected to spread and increase, till all who are connected with the unhappy being so infected share in the misery they produce.

Charles, who had not the least tincture of envy in his nature, sincerely rejoiced when he was told of this additional piece of good fortune to Robert; and, when the time for his leaving them came, took an affectionate farewell, begging him to make the most of the opportunity which Mr. Hammond's generosity afforded: "For," said he, "who knows but in time you may be able by your integrity and usefulness to make him amends for all his goodness to you!"

"I hope," cried his mother, "he will mind his learning for my sake and his own, that he may get money and live like a gentleman, and not to qualify himself for a drudge to Mr. Hammond."

"O never fear that," replied Robert, "I shall always consider myself in the first place, and follow business by which I can get the most."

"Now I hope you are jesting," said Charles; "surely your heart must be full of gratitude to your excellent friend; I am sure mine is for your sake."

"Well," replied Robert laughing, "I then will take the benefits, and you shall pay the gratitude that is due for them, for you seem to have a stock sufficient for us both."

Charles was visibly hurt, but remained silent; and after many fond caresses from Susan, Robert departed. From this time they only saw him for a short time on a Sunday, and after a few months many successive weeks often elapsed without their seeing him at all; for he felt himself degraded by visiting his mother's poor lodgings, and dreaded that any of his school-fellows should trace him there, and find out how low her conditions was: so he made a thousand false excuses for not coming, assuring his mother that as soon as he had left school he would visit her often. Meantime Charles did all he could to make her comfortable; and as he was remarkably attentive to business, his master had shown him much kindness, and considerably raised his wages, which gave him some consequence with his mother; for he gave her every shilling that he got, except what furnished his necessary cloathing, and a few books, with which he delighted to employ his leisure hours.

His industry was, however, interrupted by a dangerous illness, from which he would have had little chance of recovering, had not his master humanely sent his own apothecary, a man of considerable skill, to attend him, and supplied his mother from time to time with money to procure the necessary nourishment to forward his cure, which was far from complete at the end of many weeks: yet this unfeeling woman pressed him to return to his work, though she was assured he could not do it without the greatest danger of a relapse. "But what then is to be done?"

done?" said she. "I cannot possibly maintain him in idleness; no mother ever suffered more for a child than I have done for him in the last seven weeks; and now to be told that he must do nothing in return for all my toils, is really more than I can bear."

"You are both unreasonable and cruel," said Mr. Stanley; "your son is as anxious to go to his business again, as you can possibly be; but to tell you my real opinion, I am fully persuaded that he will never again be fit to return to the same unhealthy employment."

"Then I wish he had died at once," cried the unnatural mother: "I always thought it a misfortune to have such a poor deformed child, but I did hope he would have been able to get his bread! I now see that he is to break my heart, and must himself come to the parish."

She then began to cry and lament in such a manner as filled Mr. Stanley with indignation at her, and pity for the poor boy, whose gentle and patient behaviour during a painful illness had gained his good opinion. The next time he visited him, he told him that he thought he could not return to his former occupation with the least prospect of continued health; which was sad news to poor Charles, who lamented it more upon his mother's account than his own, and told Mr. Stanley how desirous he was to go on, as in a few years his wages would considerably increase, and he should by that means be enabled to support her under the increasing weight of years and infirmities. "I am certain," replied Mr. Stanley, "that you will suffer much if you go back to the manufactory; your delicate frame can ill bear bad air and close confinement; surely from what you have already felt you must yourself be desirous to quit it."

"I have suffered a good deal certainly," answered Charles; "but I would willingly endure much

more, to have the power of providing for my mother in sickness and old age! Think, sir, what a delight it would be to me, and what a blessing I might hope for from my Almighty Father in heaven!"

"You are an excellent young man," said Mr. Stanley; "the more I know of you, the less I am disposed to let you risk your life for one who I must say neither seems to deserve, nor to return your affection as she ought."

"Ah! sir," cried Charles, "should that lessen my desire of doing my duty to her? If we love only those who love us, what reward have we? Does not our beloved Master command us to bless and do good even to those who curse, despise, and persecute us? How much more then am I bound to help and assist my mother, though she may not always be as kind as I could wish her to be!"

"Who infused this sense of religion so early into your heart?" said Mr. Stanley: "Who was your instructor?"

"I had a friend," replied Charles, "a dear friend, who loved me; she put the Gospel into my hand, and laboured from time to time to make me understand it. She pointed out to my particular attention the character and conduct of our blessed Master; how pious, how gentle, how kind he was: I listened to her with delight; and since it has pleased the Almighty to call her away, I have a thousand times recollected her words, and seldom passed a day without reading some portion of that precious book."

After a pause of some length,— "I have been considering," said Mr. Stanley, "what to do for you; and can think of nothing better than your coming to live with me. I want a person whom I can trust, to make up medicines and attend in the shop. In such a situation you will live comfortably, and probably recover your health: I will give you twelve guineas for the first year; this will enable you to make a de-

cent appearance; and if I find you attentive and useful, I will afterwards raise your wages, which will enable you to do something for your mother."

"Dear sir," exclaimed the grateful Charles, "I am more obliged than I can express by this kind offer: a greater temptation could hardly have been held out to me, for I should delight to take the humblest part in healing the sick, and to serve you would be the joy of my heart: but I cannot excuse myself from making one more trial of my old employment, which, could I pursue it, would bring in so much more money:—should my complaint return, I hope it will not then be too late to accept of the happy resource you have mentioned."

"I do not think it will," replied Mr. Stanley: "my shopman does not leave me till Christmas; and before that time I have little doubt but you will be convinced of the necessity of quitting your present occupation."

Charles could hardly have made a greater sacrifice than this; but whenever duty opposed inclination, it was with him sure to gain the victory. The question he was anxious about, was not which would be most agreeable to himself at present, but which would most recommend him to the favour of Him who ordereth all things as pleaseth him best, both in this world and that which is to come.

The following week he returned to his work, taking every precaution which Mr. Stanley recommended with respect to diet and exercise for the benefit of his health; but after a trial of little more than a month he found himself quite incapable of going on; and being one evening seized with a fainting fit and carried out for air, his master met him, and bade them bring him into his house; where, after restoring him by a cordial, he expressed much concern at the return of his illness, and advised him immediately to consider of some new means of earning his

living. Charles thanked him for the kind interest which he took in his welfare, and mentioned the proposal he had received from Mr. Stanley, which his master advised him to accept of without delay; and after paying the little wages that was due, put a five-guinea note into his hand, wishing him recovered health and good success in the new way of life which was opening before him. This kindness drew many tears from his eyes, and acknowledgments from his grateful heart; and still more when Mr. James assured him that he would be at all times ready to befriend him, if any opportunity should offer.

Charles had tried to prepare his mother for what had now happened, by telling her how ill he often found himself; but she was always angry when he spoke upon the subject, and once said she only wished him to go on for a few years, till her dear Robert, who she knew would maintain her like a lady, got into business, and then he might humour his own foolish whims, and live as poor as he pleased. Charles was grieved at heart to see this bad and selfish disposition in his mother; but resolved still to go on returning all the good in his power, for the unkind treatment he received at her hands. It was no easy matter to him to tell her that he had finally left his work, and taken leave of his master; and though he did it in the gentlest manner, saying that he was persuaded his life depended upon it, which indeed his pale countenance and wasted form but too fully confirmed, and that he still hoped so do something for her while with Mr. Stanley, she flew into a violent passion, called him an unnatural son, and said she knew that he had long been tired of business, and now left her to starve, that he might enjoy an idle life. "I trust, dear mother," said he, mildly passing over these cruel and unjust reproaches, "I trust that you will not starve, nor I be idle, while I have the power of working. I will exert my utmost ability to serve my

new master, and never spend an unnecessary shilling upon myself while you are in want of it. I thank God that you are still able to get something, and I earnestly pray that he will continue your strength till I am able to support you."

He then produced his little stock of treasure, and gave her the five-guinea note, saying he hoped to be able to do with the money he had besides, till a quarter's wages became due, and she might depend upon receiving a part of whatever he was able to earn. This softened her a little; and knowing that his disposition was as firm and resolute as it was kind and gentle, she thought it would be as well to submit with a tolerable grace; and after a fit of peevish crying told him that she would try to reconcile herself to her hard fate, and depend upon his promise to continue helping her to the utmost of his power. Of that he gave her many assurances; and early the next morning waited upon Mr. Stanley, who gave him a most kind reception, and, notwithstanding the very weak state he was in, desired him to come that evening and take a place as one of his family, which would be the best means of forwarding his recovery, and give him an opportunity of learning the business he was to undertake, before the departure of the present shopman. He accordingly packed up his small stock of moveables, and, as the distance was short, by going twice, contrived to convey them to his master's house.

He wished much to have seen his brother before he went, to acquaint him of the necessity he was under of leaving his mother, and try to prevail upon him to visit her more frequently, for Susan had not seen her favourite more than three times in the last six months; but as he told her that he was prosperous and happy, and gained ground rapidly in Mr. Richmond's favour, she tried to be satisfied, and ~~did not~~ ^{did not} think it worth while even to let him know

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Charles had tried to prepare himself for what had now happened, by telling her that she would find herself; but she was always ready to speak upon the subject, and once again urged him to go on for a few years, until Robert, who she knew would manage his own business, and then he might be free from his foolish whims, and live as he pleased. She was grieved at heart to see his situation in his mother; but relying on all the good in his present situation, he received at her parting with him to tell her that he had taken leave of his mother in the gentlest manner, and that his life depended on her countenance and favour, and that he still remained while with Mr. Stanley, called him to her that he had let her to starve with trust, dear, and cruel and not as

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of Charles's illness: for as it was plain one was born to rise and make a figure in the world, while the other had no chance for more than hard-earned bread, there could be no use in their being much together, especially as Robert said it might spoil his fortune to be known to have such a brother; and as they had told Mr. Hammond a falsehood at first by representing him as an only child, it was necessary to carry it on,—for it would have ruined them in his good opinion if he had found out that they had once deceived him. Charles, however, knew nothing of all this, and resolved as soon as he could be spared for a couple of hours to go to the school, not being able to imagine why his mother had hitherto prevented him from making any attempt to see his brother there.

Mr. Stanley's family consisted of himself, and a maiden sister who kept his house, two pupils and three servants. Charles was of course to take his meals in the kitchen; but his master having a high opinion of his integrity, treated him from the first with great kindness; and the respectful manner in which he behaved to his sister, who was a worthy and sensible woman, and the pains he took to oblige her, gained her good opinion, and she by numberless little kindnesses rendered his life much happier than it would otherwise have been. He recovered his health rapidly, and by great attention and assiduity enabled himself, by the time the shopman left them, fully to supply his place. But not content with this, he resolved to exert his abilities and industry to the utmost in learning every part of his master's business that came within his reach; and though the two apprentices were at first disposed to hold him in great contempt on account of his low birth and the deformity of his person, yet his good sense, good nature, and obligingness won upon them by degrees; and of they were both pretty much inclined to be idle, my

gladly taught him every thing they knew, that he might be able to give them the more assistance: and this he was most desirous of doing in order to qualify himself to be more useful to his benefactor. On Sunday he always twice attended the public worship of God, and, when not particularly wanted, spent the evening with his mother, who often told him how much she missed the money he used to gain for her at the manufactory, and had more than once the cruelty to propose his returning to it again, when she perceived that his health seemed nearly re-established.

Several months had passed away, yet Charles had not found time to pay his intended visit to Robert; when one Sunday to his great joy he met him at his mother's, and was both surprised and delighted to see the great improvement which had taken place in his person and manners during the long space that had elapsed since their last meeting. Susan could not suppress her raptures; but throwing her arms around him, "My dear boy," she cried, "who could have thought of a son of mine coming to be such a gentleman as you now appear! Why, I should not wonder if Mr. Hammond took you into partnership and made you his heir! His son, I am told, will not take to the business, and he will want some one to relieve him from the trouble of it as he grows old. Dear precious boy," repeated she, again embracing him, "what a great man you will make!"

"Dear precious mother," replied Robert, coolly disengaging himself, "I wish you would be a little less violent in your fondness! I hope I shall do very well, if you and Charles will continue to let me alone; but upon that, as I have often told you, a vast deal depends."

"Ah, my darling!" replied Susan, "if I had not been well aware of it, do you think I could have restrained myself from seeing you as I have done?"

"Well, I thank you for it most heartily," returned Robert: "all my future fortune, you know, depends upon the hold I can gain in Mr. Hammond's affections; therefore it is my interest to be with him as much as possible, and I know you will excuse a little falsehood which I have made use of, because it will be so much for my good. I told him that you were gone to live with a relation in the country, that he might not expect me to leave him on a Sunday evening to visit you; and I am now grown so great a favourite, that he says he will take me into his counting-house at the end of two years. Nay, I have even hopes of being admitted as one of the family; for though he paid my master as usual for my staying at school during the holidays, he asked me to spend the last week with him; and I took so much pains to please him and his lady, that they both declared, when I went away, they should hardly know what to do without me."

"I should most sincerely rejoice in your good fortune, my dear brother," said Charles, "if you had not obtained a part of it by being guilty of a falsehood;—think how mean and disgraceful a vice it is, and you will surely be above practising it."

"Do not spoil all your brother's pleasure and my joy," interrupted Susan, "by your ill-timed preaching. Robert will be afraid of speaking before you, because you are always thwarting him, and making a fuss about trifles."

"Ah, my dear mother!" replied he, "can the difference between truth and falsehood, right and wrong, ever be esteemed a trifle?"

"Never fear me, Charles," cried Robert, "I shall be too much of a gentleman to become an habitual liar; but for departing from the strict letter of truth now and then, there is no living in the world without it."

"The smallest deviation from truth," said Charles,

"is, in my mind, as disgraceful to a gentleman as it is unworthy of a Christian, every degree of falsehood being as base and contemptible as it is wicked."

"Well, well," cried Robert impatiently, "I have no time to hear any more about it; for I only stepped down here for half an hour, and must be back at Mr. Hammond's to tea."

Susan burst into tears at hearing that she must so soon part with her darling; but he soothed and quieted her with a few caresses, and an assurance that she should see him often when his time was more at his own disposal.

Charles would gladly have walked with his brother to Mr. Hammond's door, but, knowing he would be ashamed to be seen with him in the streets, did not attempt it, so that he had no opportunity even to tell him of the change in his own situation. He was grieved to perceive that the striking improvement in his brother's person and manners seemed so far from being accompanied by any in his heart and morals, that the former appeared even more selfish than before, and the latter not in the least amended. He felt with regret that it was quite out of his power at present to influence him in any respect, and, hoping some opportunities might hereafter arise more favourable for the purpose, resolved now to comply with his request of keeping entirely from him, and to continue diligently to employ himself in his master's business; with which he by degrees became so well acquainted that much confidence was placed in him, his wages were raised, and a boy was hired to do the work at first allotted to him, and to act under his direction. This addition to his income enabled Charles to do more for his mother, and to add something to his own little savings; for he justly thought it one of the prime duties of youth and health to lay by a provision for the time of sickness and old age,

and that this might be done by almost every one, if begun early, and regularly persisted in.

During the first year, when his wages were only twelve guineas, he spared three to his mother, and laid by two for himself; the following Christmas his master gave him fifteen, and the year after raised it to twenty, which made him feel quite rich. He then regularly gave his mother five guineas, laid by five for himself, and with the other ten made a very creditable appearance; which was now more than ever necessary, as he was often employed to visit the poorer class of patients, to whom he was so kind and attentive, and of whose cases he gave his master such satisfactory accounts, that in a few years his skill was highly estimated by him and all others who had opportunities to judge of it; and in cases of sudden illness, if Mr. Stanley was not at home, Charles was generally the person required to supply his place. The interest of his savings,—which, though at first it came to a very small sum, was every year increasing,—he appropriated as a fund for the poor; and it would be difficult to describe the feelings with which he bestowed the first two shillings upon a sick family! they were such as made him ardently wish for increased power, that the same sweet sensations might be often renewed in his heart.

His master became every day more sensible of his value, and at the end of the fourth year added ten guineas to his salary and admitted him to his own table, finding in his young pupil a sensible and pleasing companion, as well as an able assistant.

In all this time he had only seen his brother now and then at their mother's. Mr. Hammond had fulfilled all his hopes and expectations by receiving him into his family, and employing him in his counting-house at the time he had first mentioned. Robert had so diligently exerted himself while at school, that he was well qualified for his situation, and contrived

make himself so agreeable that he was treated with distinguished kindness. Mr. Hammond's only son showed no inclination for business; and as his father's fortune was large, he was indulged in the pursuits that best suited his taste, and was at this time studying at Cambridge. Mrs. Hammond was out of health and went little from home, and Robert, whose person and manners were particularly agreeable, and who had always been a favourite with her, was generally one in her evening parties.

What a comfortable situation and what happy prospects had this young man! Both nature and fortune had done every thing for his advantage; it seemed difficult for him to avoid being prosperous, for all that he could desire appeared to fall into his hands without any effort of his own. The salary that his liberal master allowed him was at first sixty, and afterwards a hundred pounds a year, out of which he recommended him to send his mother a handsome annual present. But Robert, so far from having money to spare, could hardly manage to make his income do. He was vain of his fine person, and spent much more than was necessary in his dress: but this was not the worst; he became intimate with several unprincipled young men, and sometimes upon false pretences excusing himself from supping at home, spent his evenings with them at taverns, committing hateful excesses, and bribing one of Mr. Hammond's servants to admit him secretly into the house at late hours in the night, when he generally returned in a state of intoxication.

Our good or ill qualities are seldom stationary; the good are still endeavouring to improve; and whoever sets out in a vicious course, will find it a downhill path. Robert was not long satisfied with spending an evening now and then in the dissolute manner I have mentioned; but under pretence of visiting his mother for whom he pretended to have the fondest

regard, would sometimes stay a day or two at a time with his profligate companions, taking great care however to keep out of the view of any one who was likely to mention his conduct to Mr. Hammond, who was so completely deceived by his specious manners, and the perfect sobriety and correctness of his conduct in his house, that he thought him one of the best young men in the world; and, as he was really clever and attentive in the counting-house, looked forward with pleasure to the time when he would be of a proper age to be admitted into a share of his very valuable business.

Things went on exactly as I have now described for several years with the two brothers;—the one by good luck and a course of artful management still gaining upon the affections of Mr. Hammond, though he frequently indulged those evil propensities which daily became more powerful in his heart. Notwithstanding the many advantages of his situation, to which were added high health and a great flow of spirits, he was far from happy; for he was obliged at home to put on a feigned character, to appear the very reverse of what he really was:—And what can be so wearisome and difficult as constantly to act the part of a hypocrite? Nor was this all: every vicious indulgence drew his mind more and more from the love of business; and though he knew the absolute necessity of attending closely to it, as the only means of future fortune, he felt it an increasing toil; and, instead of being thankful for the prosperous condition in which he was placed, lamented his hard fate in not being born heir to such a fortune as would have enabled him to devote his whole life to pleasure.

Charles, on the other hand, was light-hearted and content: he had not even a thought which he wished to conceal: he loved his master, and had a true happiness of knowing that he became every

useful to him: he delighted in his business, for it gave him continual opportunities of comforting and relieving the afflicted; and he felt that he could never be sufficiently thankful to the Great Giver of all, for placing him in the very situation that he would have chosen had he been allowed the power of selecting from all the employments of life. He had the pleasure too of greatly assisting his mother; and at the same time his own little stock was gradually increasing, and his means of supplying the wants of the poor enlarging in proportion to it,—for he adhered strictly to his plan of bestowing the interest of his savings in charity.

Thus virtuously and prosperously was he going on, when Susan Waring was suddenly taken ill: her disorder was a violent nervous seizure, which he saw from the first would probably render her incapable of doing any thing for herself during the remainder of her life. He prevailed upon his master to see her repeatedly, and assist him with his advice, though Mr. Stanley assured him that he fully understood her case, and had treated it exactly as he should himself have done. Nothing could be more truly kind and dutiful than his attention to her: he agreed with the mistress of the house for the constant attendance of her daughter, at a regular weekly sum, and himself purchased what he judged necessary, in addition to the medicines, for promoting her cure.

Busied as he constantly was for his master, he contrived to see her twice every day, and while she was at the worst sat up with her several nights. She seemed very little affected with these his unwearied efforts to do her good, but talked incessantly of Robert; yet when Charles proposed to fetch him to her she opposed it, which seemed strange to him, as he had no suspicion of the true reason why he was kept from Mr. Hammond's house. At length, however, she had recollection enough to bid him write to his

brother, which he accordingly did: but the letter happened to arrive when Robert was out of town on pretence of visiting his mother, but in reality to attend a horse-race at some distance. No answer of course was returned, and his mother the following day became very restless because he did not come. Charles resolved to call upon him the next morning, believing the recovery of his patient quite hopeless unless he could make her mind easy.

He was introduced into a parlour at Mr. Hammond's, and in a few minutes Robert entered; but the moment he cast his eyes upon his brother his countenance changed: "What occasion could you possibly have for coming here?" cried he: "I have received your letter, and as soon as I have transacted some necessary business shall go to my mother!"

"I would not have intruded upon you," replied Charles mildly, "if I had not thought your speedy coming of real consequence to her: But why should you thus dread the sight of a brother, who is not conscious of having committed a single action in the course of his life, that can bring disgrace upon you or himself?"

"Why, I have often told you," answered Robert, "how ridiculously proud Mr. Hammond and his family are; they would not suffer me to remain in their house if any of my relations were to visit me: but you may assure yourself I should be happy to see you at any time, if I could avoid giving offence to them."

"I have but little time to spare," replied Charles, "but I anxiously wish to see you oftener than I do. Could not we contrive to meet at our mother's, if but for an hour once in a week?"

"Impossible," cried Robert eagerly; "I am so hampered with business as often not to have a single minute in a week that I can call my own: ~~but I~~ must entreat you not to come any more to this house,

and if I can I will contrive to meet you now and then at a third place."

"Where can we meet so well as at our mother's?" said Charles: "the sight of you will be the best cordial that can be given her."

"She can have it but very seldom," returned the unfeeling Robert; "she tires me to death with her excessive fondness, and she teases me for money which I cannot spare; for though my income is a pretty good one, I assure you I find it too little for my own expenses; it will be six weeks before I shall have a guinea to receive, and I have several heavy debts."

"I am shocked to hear this account," said Charles: "there are few things that I dread more than getting into debt, and hardly any thing that I would not suffer to avoid it. But surely, dear Robert, it must be your own fault; lessen your expenses, and then you will have enough. To know how to live upon a little is the true art of being rich."

"That is a maxim for a poor man," cried Robert laughing, "and as I intend to be rich, it does not suit me. But I will talk more with you when we meet this evening at our mother's; where I will try to be by eight o'clock; and till then I must bid you adieu, for I am wanted at this moment in the counting-house."

Saying this he hurried his brother out of the house, dreading that his person should attract the attention of any of the servants, and further inquiries lead to the discovery of who he was.

Charles went home not altogether dissatisfied with his visit; the sweet countenance and lively manner of Robert gave him very much the appearance of good nature, though in reality it was only a cover for a heart which, young as he was, vice had considerably hardened; and he hoped, by meeting him more frequently, to have opportunities of trying how

far it was in his power to influence his mind and conduct.

As soon as he could be spared in the evening he hastened to his mother's, and to his great joy found Robert with her. The sight of him had thrown her into a violent palpitation, from which she was not recovered when Charles entered. He gave her some drops; and holding out his hand to his brother, "I am happy to find you here," said he, "and I hope you have not found our mother worse than you expected; she has gained some ground in the last day or two."

"I know that I shall be better," said the poor sick woman, "if you, my darling, will come often to see me."

"That is utterly out of my power," replied Robert, quite unmoved by the tremulous voice in which she spoke; "my time is so fully occupied, that you must try, dear mother, to make yourself content, as you have hitherto done, with knowing that I am doing well, without expecting to see me more frequently."

"Surely, now I am so ill," answered she weeping, "your master will spare you sometimes. Charles has a great deal to do, and yet he comes here continually."

"His situation and mine are widely different," said Robert; "Mr. Hammond requires my constant attendance; and unless you wish to ruin all my hopes, you will not ask me to leave him for an hour when I can possibly avoid it."

Soon after this he took out his watch, and observed, that it was almost nine o'clock, and he should hardly be at home by supper-time. She entreated him to stay a little longer, reminding him that it was many weeks since they had met before. With great apparent impatience and uneasiness he remained another half-hour, while she gave him

some account of her sufferings, and then took a hasty leave.

His brother followed him to the door, and asked him when he would come again; "Not this month," answered he; "I can do my mother no good, and my time is too precious to be thrown away."

Charles was shocked at his unnatural behaviour; but, steady to his benevolent purpose, after considering a moment, "Tell me," said he, "before you go, when and where I shall meet you again. Think of some other place, or I shall certainly call upon you at Mr. Hammond's."

"Well," cried Robert angrily, "I will meet you when you think proper at the White Lion in Duke-street; but I cannot conceive to what purpose."

"Name the day and hour," said Charles, "and I will be exact to the time."

"Let it then be this day se'nnight at six in the evening," answered Robert: "Do not mention my name in the house, but order tea in a private room, and I will find you out."

He then hurried away to a tavern where he had agreed to spend the evening with some gay companions; and Charles returned for a short time to his mother, whose mind he tried to soothe and reconcile to the cruel conduct of that son, to whose slightest advantage she would even yet, had an opportunity offered, have sacrificed all that was dear to his meritorious brother. After a time she became composed, promising to make herself as easy as she could in the absence of her darling; and still pleasing herself with the hope of great things from him hereafter.

Robert's behaviour on this last occasion greatly lessened the hope which Charles had entertained of being able to bring about a reformation in him; but he resolved not to give up his endeavours while he ~~could~~ gain opportunities of renewing them. When the appointed day arrived, he went at the hour agreed

upon to the White Lion; and, ordering tea as he had been directed, waited near half an hour in a good deal of anxiety, fearing that Robert would not come: but at length he made his appearance; and, seeming in high spirits and good-humour, sat down by him, gaily exclaiming, "I hope, dear Charles, you will have great pleasure in this meeting, for you have taken much pains to bring it about; though I own I have been all the week puzzling my poor brains to no purpose to guess what is the object of it."

"I will tell you honestly and at once," replied Charles, "that my object is to converse with you. Why should we, who are bound together by the nearest and tenderest ties of kindred, remain almost strangers to each other? All that I ask of you for myself, is, that we may maintain a friendly intercourse; you will never meet with any one who has your interest and happiness more at heart than I have; and small as is my knowledge of the world, if you will repose confidence in me, I may sometimes be an useful adviser to you, who are exposed to many temptations to which peculiar circumstances in my situation render me less liable."

"You are right there," cried Robert; "I have plenty of temptations, and very little power or inclination to resist them. Now I know you order all your proceedings by the right and the wrong, which I think little about: pleasure is my object, and I only submit to the drudgery of business that I may get money to purchase her."

"I too am a lover of pleasure," returned Charles; "but our pleasures are of different kinds; and the question between us is which is the genuine sort; which produces the greatest sum of happiness?"

"Why, to own the truth," cried Robert, "I am entirely at a loss to imagine of what kind your pleasures can be, and never supposed you pretended to have any. You never go to any public amusement; you never enter a tavern, or even a coffee-house;

you keep no company, spend no money;—pray give me an account of these same pleasures, for I am sure they are not to be found upon my list.”

“You know, my dear brother,” said Charles, “that I am no boasting hypocrite, and will not suspect me of vanity or ostentation when I tell you, in sincerity of heart, that the greatest pleasure I can feel, is that of showing my devotion and gratitude to the Giver of all good, by benefiting any of his creatures: in this, my prime delight, the business in which I am happily engaged affords me almost daily opportunities of indulging: my master permits me to attend all his patients of the lower class, and to give what medicines I think necessary to the poor, free of all expense; this is an invaluable privilege, and, I believe, has been the means of saving many lives. Then I take all occasions that offer,—and many present themselves in sick-rooms,—to enforce the necessity of increasing piety and amended lives; and in these endeavours to better the hearts and morals of my patients, I hope I have not been altogether unsuccessful.”

“So the first pleasure on your list,” said Robert smiling, “is visiting the poorest of the people when they are sick, giving them medicines, and exhorting them to lead godly lives! Now I should account all this the heaviest toil that could possibly be imposed:—but what is the greatest delight of your life next to this?”

“Perhaps,” answered Charles, “I ought to put down as the first, the high favour which God has bestowed by enabling me to assist my mother; and in this, my dear brother, I trust you will be as desirous to share with me as I can be to ask it.”

“Why,” replied Robert, “I have been a little negligent about that; she must have cost you a good deal of money.”

“What she has hitherto cost me,” returned

Charles, "I have been well able to spare; but I shall now be unable to support her as I wish, without your assistance. I have no hope of her ever being able to do any thing more for herself; and she cannot be tolerably taken care of for less than thirty pounds a year."

"That is a large sum," said Robert gravely; "it is out of my power to do much, for, as I told you before, I really have not enough for myself."

"My salary, you know," replied Charles, "is thirty guineas; ten of which I allow her, another ten I lay by, and a third furnishes my own expenses."

"And pray," said Robert laughing, "what becomes of the interest of your savings?—You have doubtless some grand purpose for so vast a sum?"

"Oh, I put that out," returned Charles, "in a way that, small as you may think it, brings me much present pleasure, and promises future gain."

"Why, sure," said Robert, "you, who are labouring hard for your own bread, cannot be so romantic as to give away any thing in charity! If I could contrive to save, it should certainly be for myself."

"I agree," answered Charles, "that a poor man's first care should be to provide for his own future wants, and those of his family while they are helpless, and you see I act accordingly by laying by a third of my income; but it is my delight to bestow the increasing sum which arises from the interest of it, in relieving the wants of those who are unable to help themselves; and I think this small departure from worldly prudence, this tribute of gratitude to the Great Bestower of all, gives me a better right to the enjoyment of the rest."

"You are a very singular young man," said Robert, "and I could almost find in my heart ~~to envy~~ you the satisfaction you seem to enjoy in your quiet

regular way. But I do not know what can be done about this large sum of money that you say must be had for my mother; I cannot possibly spare her twenty pounds a year, which I suppose is what you expect from me: you are a much richer man than I, for you have all that you seem to wish for, and even money to spare, while I deny myself a thousand things that I want, and yet cannot make my income do."

"Ah, my dear brother," cried Charles affectionately, "how easily might you be as happy as I am, and do more good! for your means are greater: but till you have paid your debts, I will only ask you for fifteen pounds a year for our mother, and will take five from my savings to supply the deficiency."

"You distress me very greatly," replied Robert, "by asking for so much; but when my next quarter's income comes in, I will see what can be done."

A waiter now brought in the tea, and no further conversation worth relating took place between the brothers. Charles wished to have settled a plan for their meeting in the same place once in a fortnight: but Robert would only agree to coming the first Monday in every month; and though he knew the heavy expense that his mother must at this time be at, and had a purse in his pocket containing sixteen guineas, he went away without offering him a single shilling, well knowing that a large sum would be wanting in the course of the ensuing month to defray the demands of pleasure, that insatiable, devouring idol, to which he devoted himself and all that he could acquire.

Charles found it necessary to do more for the relief of his mother's wants than he had mentioned to his brother, and gave up all thoughts of saving any thing that year. But this gave him no concern: on the contrary, every sacrifice he made to duty seemed a happy opportunity afforded him of laying up trea-

sure in that safe and happy country "where no moth or rust corrupts, and where no thieves can break through and steal." He felt impatient for the next time of seeing his brother; for, though he was fully aware of the narrow selfishness of his conduct, and could have little doubt of the manner in which his large income was wasted, he hoped his bad habits were not yet so firmly rooted as to render all efforts to reclaim him useless. Many and earnest were his petitions to their heavenly Father for his conversion, and he resolved that nothing on his part should be wanting to forward an event so ardently to be desired.

When the day fixed for their next meeting came, Charles went at the hour agreed upon, and found Robert waiting for him. He appeared all gaiety, but told him that he could not stay with him more than half an hour, as he had found it impossible to avoid an engagement for that evening to attend a party of ladies to the theatre. Charles was disappointed and hurt, to find that he thought it too much to spare one evening in a month to a brother who so anxiously requested it, and still more at the coldness with which he inquired for his mother, and his cruelty in refusing to name a time for seeing her again. He was too much displeased with his behaviour to suffer him to mention the money which he had reason to expect from him for her support; and Robert would probably have gone away without leaving any, had he not feared a visit from his brother to remind him of it: but the dread of that induced him at parting to put a five-pound note into his hand, at the same time assuring him that it was not without real inconvenience that he could spare it.

The necessity for receiving money bestowed with so ill a grace, brought the colour into Charles's cheeks; but his own funds were too slender for him to feel at liberty to refuse it, and he knew how ac-

ceptable it would be to his mother, as an earnest of the good things which she still flattered herself she should live to receive from her favourite. He was unwilling, too, to give the least offence to his brother, as it might lessen his chance of being able in future to influence his mind: so they parted upon friendly terms, and agreed to meet again at the usual time.

These monthly meetings continued to be regularly held for near five years, during all which time Susan Waring was in a melancholy state of nervous debility, seldom seeing her darling, of whom she almost incessantly talked; but most kindly and dutifully attended by Charles, who, though his time was very fully occupied, never failed to see her every day, and from him she received her chief support; for, notwithstanding his affecting accounts of her sufferings, and Robert's knowledge of the sum which must be laid out upon her, and the small means which his brother had to furnish it, every guinea he spared for that purpose was so unwillingly given, that we may conclude not one would have been bestowed had he not feared that Charles, if provoked, would have made himself and his mother's situation known to Mr. Hammond,—a discovery which he had indeed reason to dread; for that gentleman's attachment to him was so entirely founded on the high opinion he had formed of the strict honour and integrity of his character, that, had he in any one instance found him capable of falsehood and deceit, it was more than probable that he would have entirely cast him off.

How safe and delightful is the path of truth! Had Robert concealed nothing in his situation from Mr. Hammond, he would have escaped many an uneasy hour; for, though he had no fear of Charles's betraying the secret, he was under constant apprehensions that it might come out by one of those acci-

dents against which the most artful cannot always guard. But this was not all that he had to dread: I have before mentioned, that, under pretence of going to a play or some other amusement which his master did not entirely disapprove, he often absented himself from the family in an evening, and, in company with other unprincipled young men, committed shameful excesses; and his fears, lest any of these should come to the knowledge of his benefactor, often deprived him of peace by day and rest at night. If Mr. Hammond seemed less kind than usual, or spoke to him with the least reserve, his guilty conscience took the alarm: for though he was now so well acquainted with business that he could have obtained a good salary any where, he was fully aware that nothing like the present situation could be hoped for in any other place, and his future prospects were such as it would be madness for him to forfeit. Yet all these advantages did he hazard the loss of, to indulge that fatal love of what is called pleasure, to which so many young men sacrifice all that is worthy in this world, and all that is precious in the next.

Charles proceeded upon far different principles: the great object of his life was to recommend himself to the favour of Him "whose we are," who freely gave us all that we possess, and to whom we must look for all future blessings: he delighted in the assurance that this infinitely wise and powerful Being is also infinitely good, and that his eye is always upon us: and whether our conduct is rightly estimated by the world, or whether we succeed in our plans for rising in it, is a matter of little consequence, if He who maketh rich and maketh poor approves of what we do. In order to gain this favour, "which is better than life," he was anxious to make the best of every moment of his time, fully sensible that no hour passes which may not be rendered valuable, by forwarding the great work of our

salvation. "Pressing forward continually towards the mark," and looking for the prize of his "high calling," he thought little of any difficulties that lay in his way, but went happily and cheerfully through a life which to most young men would have seemed hard and laborious. The love and gratitude which he felt for his master, made him think he could never do enough to serve him; and he took such interest in the recovery of his patients, and was so skilful in his treatment of them, that he brought him much additional business. Mr. Stanley was sensible of this, and told him that, benefited as he was by his uncommon exertions, he felt in duty bound to give him a larger share in the profits;—that he wished to take him as a partner, but judged him as yet too young for that situation; and the circumstances of his family making it at present impossible for him to reward him in the degree he deserved, he must beg of him to accept of an additional twenty guineas to his salary.

Charles thanked him in the warmest terms for his kind expressions and liberal offer, but refused to take more than half the sum he mentioned, added to the thirty he received before, as he knew his master had lately paid large debts for an extravagant, unfeeling son, and could ill spare any considerable part of his present income. This generous conduct so endeared him to Mr. Stanley, that from this time he was treated both by him and his worthy sister with all the tender confidence of affectionate parents. In their house too he had the advantage of conversing with many well-informed people, and of reading many valuable books, so that he improved in understanding and gained knowledge every day; and if he was less handsome and fashionable than Robert, he far excelled him in all the more solid and valuable attainments, and was a thousand times happier, enjoying the heart-cheering testimony of

an approving conscience, which told him that he was fulfilling the noble purpose for which he was created, diligently performing the work which his "Father had given him to do."

His monthly meetings with Robert continued to interest him deeply:—mistaking, as is too often done, his lively open gaiety of manner for real goodness, which was never yet found in a vicious character,—he flattered himself with sanguine hopes of his reformation, and never lost an opportunity of placing virtue in all her loveliness, and vice, as she really is when stripped of her mask, deformed and hideous, before his eyes. One evening Robert came, in unusually high spirits, and boasted that Mr. Hammond had considerably raised his salary; upon which Charles sincerely congratulated him, and affectionately taking his hand, "Show yourself worthy of his kindness," said he;—"by bestowing a part upon your suffering mother, bring a blessing upon the rest."

"I expected this from you," replied Robert, "and wish it was in my power to do as you desire: but I have a sum of money to pay at this time, which will really make me poor; and I am now at an unusual expense, for Miss Hammond, an heiress to whom her uncle is guardian has been with us for the last three weeks, and I attend her to all public places, and indeed in private parties as often as I can without attracting the notice of Mr. Hammond, whom I should be sorry to alarm."

"Surely," said Charles with earnestness, "you can have no improper intentions with respect to the young lady?"

"I do not know what you may call improper intentions," replied Robert; "but if she is disposed to give herself and her fortune to me, I shall not think myself bound to refuse them."

Charles arose from his seat: "I hope," cried he,

"you are not serious: I would not own as a brother a man capable of so base an action! What! would you requite your benefactor by undermining the principles and ruining the fortune of his niece?"

"But if I marr her fortune," replied Robert with his usual coolness, "I shall make my own, which I feel to be a matter of full as much consequence: and when all is over, what can Mr. Hammond do, but forgive us, and take me into partnership; that I may be able, with the ten thousand pounds which she will in a year come into possession of, to maintain his niece in the manner my own heart could wish?"

Charles's colour went and came: "I have no words," cried he in a stifled voice, "to express the indignation I feel at so infamous a plan!"

"Well then, brother," said Robert laughing, "comfort yourself with knowing that no such plan ever has been or can be laid. I am not a wretch hardened enough to execute such a scheme; and if I were, it would be out of my power; for Miss Hammond is engaged to her cousin, and they only wait for her coming of age for the marriage to take place."

Charles looked steadfastly at his brother, whose countenance remained nearly unmoved. "May I believe you?" said he: "I conjure you not to deceive me!"

"I had no notion," replied Robert, rising and kindly taking his hand, "I had no idea that you would have been seriously affected by what I meant only as a jest to make you smile. Could you imagine that I would make such a return for the favours I have been daily receiving from Mr. Hammond for more than ten years? No, I should be a monster if I did not love him as a father; and were I capable of giving him one hour of misery, I must be an unfeeling villain!"

"Never again try to make me smile," said Charles, "by representing yourself in a hideous light. You know that my heart pants after your complete reformation, and that there is nothing that I would not do or suffer to advance its progress;—do not then shock me by appearing for a moment worse than you really are."

"I own myself to be far from what you wish," returned Robert, "far from what I ought to be: but your efforts are not entirely lost; I think often and seriously of what you say; and as a proof that it has some influence over my actions, I now beg of you to carry this ten-pound note to my mother, and tell her that I hope to spend an evening with her very soon."

Charles held out his hand:—"O that you would always act thus!" said he; "believe me, my dear brother, it would make me happier than I can describe." He then told him of the addition that Mr. Stanley had made to his salary, and the prospect he had of a future partnership with him. Robert congratulated him on both, but blamed him for refusing to accept of all that he offered, observing, that it was hard he who deserved so much, should be kept poor to enable his master to support the extravagance of a profligate son.

"I do not think it a hardship," returned Charles; "I feel for the misery my excellent friend suffers, and rejoice that it is in my power to assist him: and so far am I from being poor, that, as I shall be careful not to increase my expenses, the addition to my income, and your future assistance with respect to my mother, will soon make me rich."

The brothers spent the remainder of the evening in more harmony than usual. Robert seemed more disposed to think justly than he had ever done before, and Charles went home rejoicing in the apparent change that had already taken place. He went

with no small pleasure to his mother the next morning to deliver the ten-pound note; but she had by degrees sunk into so unhappy a state, that even a present and a kind message from Robert scarcely gave her a sensation of pleasure. She had always been of a selfish disposition, and now nothing could call her attention even for an hour from her own sufferings. The poor girl who took care of her, heard of nothing else from morning till night; and to Charles her complaints were mingled with reproaches for his want of skill to remove the cause of them. This excellent young man bore all with the greatest mildness: the more unreasonable she was, the more he pitied her and exerted himself for her relief:—a cure he did not hope for, but he left nothing in his power undone that could contribute to her ease and comfort; and his good master insisted upon furnishing all the medicines that were given her, free of expense. Nor was this all; Mrs. Stanley, who I have before said was a worthy woman, often visited her, taking jellies and other nourishing things, which, had Susan Waring been of a good and grateful disposition, must have given her much comfort: but she scarcely thanked her for this kind notice; teased her with a constant repetition of her complaints; and when she kindly tried to console her present afflictions, by reminding her of the happy change which awaits the real Christian beyond the grave, she would grow impatient, and tell her that her spirits were too weak to bear the thoughts of death. Often, indeed, had her excellent son endeavoured to lead her mind to that only sure refuge from the calamities of this world, the hope of a glorious eternity in the next; but always in vain:—while in health, her heart had been a stranger to God, and devoted to the low pursuits of this passing scene; and how should she now break through the habits of many years, when her body and mind were impaired by a cruel

disease? how could she hope to find comfort and consolation in Him, of whom in her youth and health she had never thought; whose written word she scarcely deemed worth a perusal, and whose sacred and holy laws she had continually broken! It could not be! She had laid up none of those precious cordials for sickness and old age, which the recollections of a well-spent life never fail to furnish: she had cast no "bread upon the waters," and now, in the days of her necessity, how could she hope to find it?

Her wretched state of mind gave inexpressible concern to her dutiful and pious son: he wished to talk to her of God's mercy to the truly penitent; but she always stopped him with reproaches, calling him cruel, and saying that he could have no wish but to kill her, by putting her in mind of her sins now that it was too late to help them. Poor Charles always left her with a heavy heart, yet he was not without consolation in his grief; the cheering reflection that he had, notwithstanding all discouragements, unceasingly performed his duty towards this unhappy parent, and his resolution still to persevere, poured balm upon his wounded mind. When we are conscious that we have in sincerity and with diligence endeavoured to do our part, how entirely, and with what filial confidence, can we "cast all our care upon God," knowing that he "careth for us!"

When the end of the month approached, Charles looked forward with impatience to the day when he was again to see his brother, hoping to find him in the same disposition as he appeared when they last parted, and intending to propose their meeting in future more frequently, which he now thought would be as agreeable to Robert as it would always have been to himself. These ideas were uppermost in his mind, when one morning, as he was returning home

from visiting a patient, a letter was put into his hand: he perceived that it came from Robert, and with much surprise that the post mark was Carlisle:—stepping into a small parlour behind the shop he opened it, and read as follows:

“Dear Charles,

“The deed is done, and my fortune made. I am now on my return from Scotland, whither I carried Miss Hammond full speed in a chaise-and-four, to put me into possession of herself and her fortune such as it is at present; for, as I told you, the precious ten thousand pounds is not to be mine for a year to come. Now I know this charming news will put you into a terrible passion! You and I have always differed in our notions; you were for doing what was right, and I for what was pleasant: now mark which succeeds the best; I am married to a rich heiress, am on the road to London, where I shall have a handsome house, a stud of horses, a carriage, livery-servants, and every thing that denotes a gentleman; while you are a poor journeyman apothecary, maintaining your mother, and laying by money upon forty guineas a year! I always told you that luck would carry me well through the world, without much trouble on my own part. I was horribly alarmed, though, the last time we met; for I saw plainly that if I had not cleverly turned about, and persuaded you that I was a pattern of honour and honesty, all would have been over with my match; you would have prevented me from carrying off Mr. Hammond’s niece, as effectually as you once did his money.

“But the chief reason of my writing to you at this time, is to beg of you, dear Charles, not to say a word of your relationship to me to any one who does not know it already, or, for the world, to go near Mr. Hammond, whose favour I now want more than ever; for my aim is to get into partner-

ship with him, which will secure me a large income, and, as I can employ others to do the chief part of the business, give me little trouble. Unless this can be brought about, you will not expect me to furnish you with any more money, at least till my wife comes of age; for till then we must principally live upon borrowing, and I have a few debts to begin with.

"Farewell! Do not write to me till your anger is over, and then direct to No. 24, St. James's Street, Westminster.

"Yours affectionately,

"ROBERT WARING."

I will not attempt to describe the feelings of Charles during the perusal of this letter: they were a heart-rending mixture of grief and indignation, each so acute, and together so exquisitely painful, as to be nearly insupportable. At length, clasping his hands together, he exclaimed,—“The deed is indeed done, which proclaims thee decidedly a villain. Ungrateful! Deceitful! Can there be words more expressive of all that is hateful and contemptible? Selfish and unfeeling I had always too much reason to know thee; but of an action like this I did not believe thee capable.”

After again reading the letter, which, by the careless levity with which it was written, added to his disgust on a second perusal, he hurried up to his own room, and in some degree relieved his full heart by writing the following answer:

“I have read your letter, and it has given me pangs, of which you, who feel only for yourself, can form no idea. What must the heart of that man be, who for benefits and favours innumerable returns cruel injuries! Ask yourself whether an ungrateful, hypocritical deceiver is not a villain?—and can you endure to feel yourself justly entitled

to so detestable a character? Can any thing make you amends for the misery of knowing that it has been earned by your base ungenerous conduct to one who took you from a state of ignorance and comparative poverty, and fostered you in his bosom with all the tenderness of a father!

"Vain as you seem to be of your present situation, believe me, I would rather exchange conditions with the most wretched object who solicits alms in the streets, if it be an honest man, than with you. No prospect of riches or grandeur can heal the wounds of a guilty conscience! But supposing these may be quieted for a time by the pleasures, as you call them, of a dissipated life, I do not think you can long have the power of continuing even these paltry enjoyments. You will considerably lessen your wife's fortune before it comes into your hands, and I think your conduct must have cut off all hope of a partnership with her uncle. Even in a worldly point of view, you have probably ruined yourself; for who will receive a second time into his confidence a man who has deceived him! Do you not tremble at the solemn denunciation of Scripture, which says, "The hope of the hypocrite shall perish?"

"You have nothing to fear from me; every wish of my heart respecting you has hitherto been to do you good: my desires are still the same, but I have lost all present hope. While you continue prosperous and unchanged, I neither desire to see or hear from you; but should a gracious Providence mercifully visit you with such afflictions as dispose you to "arise and go to your Father," with an humble and truly penitent heart; then I will again remember that I have a brother, and open my heart and arms to receive him. With truth and sincerity I subscribe myself, now and ever,

"Your ardent well-wisher,

"CHARLES WARING."

When this letter was sent to the post-office, the mind of Charles became more calm, but the grief he felt on being obliged to see the depravity of his brother's character in its full extent, lay heavy on his heart: he was, however, soon roused from these sad reflections by a message which required his immediate attendance on his mother. He found her in a state of perfect insensibility; and perceived that it had been caused by a paralytic stroke. He ordered all to be done that he thought might possibly relieve her, but with little hope of success, for her exhausted frame seemed incapable of long supporting so severe an attack. He was informed by the mistress of the house, that it was occasioned by a neighbour, who, having heard of Robert's great marriage, told her of it in so sudden a manner, that it threw her into a fearful agitation, which brought on what he saw.

The tender hearted Charles wept over the deplorable condition of his mother. Her countenance was greatly altered, and one side become entirely useless: after various applications she recovered a degree of sense, but, during the few days that she survived, was never able to speak so as to be understood: he scarcely left her room, watching every symptom of her disease, and exerting his utmost skill for her relief. What apparently trifling circumstances give delight to an affectionate heart! A few hours before her death, as this excellent son was smoothing the pillow of his suffering parent, she looked kindly in his face, and with the poor weak hand, which she could yet use, lifted his to her lips. He felt the quivering pressure in the inmost recesses of his heart: it seemed to say, "My son, I thank you for all your care and tenderness!" and the sweet sensation of that moment overpaid him for all that he had done and suffered on her account: nor did he ever afterwards think of his mother, without a recollection of

this affecting circumstance, which on his gentle nature had so powerful an effect, as almost to blot out all remembrance of her former harshness.

After the funeral, Charles felt that he had lost the chief object for whom he lived. His mother had indeed been a heavy trouble and expense to him: but the performance of a duty can never be unattended with pleasure; and now that he had lost her and his brother nearly at the same time, it was not surprising that he felt a painful want of interest in the objects round him. But the healing hand of time, by degrees, and imperceptibly, filled up this void. He had now more money than he could without imprudence devote to that object which was always nearest to his heart,—the relief of his afflicted brethren. To dispense this was a delightful task. He took great pleasure too in the society of Mr. Stanley and his sister, and a few other sensible friends, and often stole happy and profitable hours from sleep, to spend in his darling occupation, reading, still preferring to every other that book of books, which is “able to make us wise unto salvation;” which teaches us that this passing world is a school in which we are placed to learn those Christian virtues which alone can qualify us for heaven; and to view death as the messenger sent to fetch us home to our Father’s house.

Seeing things in this cheering, this rational and true light, he was both shocked and surprised at the careless lives which the generality of people appear to lead, at their earnestness about the trifling concerns of this world, and the little thought they bestow upon the next. His loins were always “girded about,” and “his lights burning!” He waited diligently preparing for the return of his Lord; and, far from fearing his approach, he looked for it with increasing ardour and delight, full of faith in his promises who says, “Blessed are those servants

whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching."

Charles might now be truly called his master's right hand; without him he could scarcely have carried on his extensive business, for his spirits were worn down, and his health greatly injured, by the unprincipled conduct of his son, whom with a thoughtless wife and large family he almost entirely supported, though he had been educated for a profitable profession, and might have acquired a fortune, had not idle and profligate habits unfitted him for all praiseworthy exertions. Charles became daily more and more attached to Mr. Stanley and his sister; and receiving from them continual proofs of an affection resembling that of tender parents, his return of gratitude and love might be truly said to equal that of a dutiful son. He was now admitted, and every where received, as a full partner in the business, and offered a considerable share in the profits; but he absolutely refused, till his friend could more conveniently spare it, to accept of more than a salary of fifty guineas a year, half of which he laid up, and the rest he divided between his own small expenses and the calls of charity.

He had received no answer to the letter he had written to his brother; but common report informed him, that Mr. Hammond, as might have been expected, refused to see or have communication with him, except what was necessary to transmit his wife's allowance of a hundred and fifty pounds a year till she came of age, when her whole fortune would of course fall into his hands. Robert was so disappointed and provoked at Mr. Hammond's absolute determination not to be reconciled to him or his niece, or to give their marriage the least countenance, that he refused to settle a shilling upon his wife, or any future family they might have; and all who heard of the expensive manner in which they

lived, foretold that a few years must bring poverty upon them.

This conduct in his brother was no more than Charles expected: he had never doubted that misery would even in this world be the consequence of vice and folly, and this was only one more instance of its certainty. Disposed as was his benevolent heart to expand itself towards all his fellow-creatures, the selfish character of Robert had always checked the warm affection which he would otherwise have felt for him: there were few points in which they could cordially agree; and had Charles been intimately acquainted with his manner of life during the time he resided in Mr. Hammond's house, had he witnessed the scenes of intemperance in which he was sometimes plunged, and the hypocritical covering of sobriety and good sense in which he always appeared when within the notice of his generous benefactor, —he would probably have felt a degree of horror and aversion which would have forced him to break off all connexion with so hateful a character. Deceit and double-dealing were so peculiarly opposite to the open and artless disposition of Charles, that he was at a loss to conceive a motive strong enough to induce any one to practise it. He could not account for a rational being devoting himself to those evil deeds which cause him to "love darkness rather than light!" So entirely was he "of the truth," that he could only look with pity and abhorrence on the children of deceit, without being at all able to enter into their views in adopting a system so painful, so disgraceful, and in the end so ruinous.

Two years had passed away since the marriage of Robert, when poor Charles's heart had a sorrow to endure, more tenderly afflicting than any which he had yet felt, in the loss of his dear friend and patron Mr. Stanley, who fell into a rapid decline, having from the first no doubt how it would end. At this

time, he gave an affecting proof of attachment to his pupil, by the unwearied pains which he took in recommending him as his successor, to all his friends: speaking of him as one upon whose skill and attention they might safely rely; one to whom he felt himself indebted for the comfort and prosperity of his latter years, and whose general character was so excellent that every worthy man must feel an interest in his well-doing. These kind recommendations completed the work for which Charles's good conduct had laid a solid foundation. Scarcely one of Mr. Stanley's patients failed in promising not only to employ, but to speak of him in the terms which he deserved to their connexions; so that he felt quite at ease with respect to the situation in which he should leave his young friend. His business had for a long time past brought him in a clear profit of between five and six hundred pounds a year; and he had every reason to believe that it would rather increase than diminish in the hands of his successor.

A few days before his death, he sent for Charles to his bed-side, and tenderly pressing his hand; "My dear child," said he, "I feel that the awful hour draws near in which I shall leave this world, which has been to me a scene of much trouble and distress; yet I have been what is called prosperous in life, and should perhaps have had a large share of its comforts, had not the bad conduct of my unhappy son continually dashed the cup of blessing from my lips. I have suffered much for him; more perhaps on account of his wordly prosperity than I ought to have done. I now see things in a different light; I have laboured too much for the bread that perisheth! Had I early and carefully instilled into his mind lessons of piety, had I laid the only sure foundation for right actions, by teaching him first to "seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness," all other things would have been added unto him.

But my mind was filled with the cares of the present hour. I gave him what is called a good education, but the love of God is little taught in schools and colleges. What he learned there fitted him for gaining a fortune by his profession, if he had at the same time been sober and industrious; but I did not sufficiently check the love of pleasure which showed itself in his early youth, and it grew so strong in him, that every thing useful and worthy gave way to it, and the gay idle youth became a vicious man!"

Here Mr. Stanley, affected and much exhausted, sunk back upon his pillow. Charles administered a cordial, which revived him, and in a short time he thus proceeded:

"Till I knew you, I never conceived it possible for the passions and inclinations of youth to be brought so near to the true Gospel standard. Alas! you have too late convinced me, that the first duty of a parent is to sow the seeds of genuine piety in the hearts of his children; to direct the first dawn of their ideas toward Him who made them; to propose his approbation as the sweet reward of every right action, and his displeasure as the evil most to be dreaded when we do wrong. O Charles, had I in time been sensible of this, how different might my son now have been! But I will say no more on this painful subject. May the Almighty forgive this fatal error! I was unconscious of it at the time, and thought the chief duty of a father was to secure to his children a large portion of this world's goods. But your example, my dear child, has convinced me, that a man's happiness depends much more upon the state of his mind than the value of his possessions.

"This may be the last time in which I shall be able to converse with you; let me therefore take the opportunity to thank you for all the kindness that I have received at your hands."

"O my dear master," said Charles, "do not name the little that I have been able to do in return for all the benefits which you have conferred upon me! Did you not save me from poverty and disease, and treat me as a tender parent would his son?"

"I bless my heavenly Father," answered Mr. Stanley, lifting up one hand, "for making me the means of placing you in a situation where you are, and I trust will be eminently useful: but I had no merit in this; I took you into my house merely as a servant, and it has been by your own extraordinary industry and good conduct, which has made you as precious to me as a darling child. You have been the support and comfort of my latter years; without you I should long since have sunk under sickness and sorrow."

Charles was greatly affected: he knelt down by the bed, and taking the pale hand of his friend tenderly between his own, "Tell me, dear sir," said he, "Tell me if there is any thing that I can do for you or yours; all that I have, and all that I ever can acquire, you have a right to dispose of; for from you all will be derived."

"There is one thing," answered Mr. Stanley; "I have been able but slenderly to provide for my sister, and at her time of life it is hard to be exposed to the buffetings of an unfeeling world!"

"That dear and excellent woman," replied Charles, "has long encouraged me to look up to her as to a tender mother, and I trust she will not now desert her adopted child. I trust that she will always consider herself as mistress of any house that I am in possession of; and should I be early called out of this world, I will make what addition is in my power to her means of living."

Mr. Stanley gently pressed his hand, but remained silent.

"Will you permit me, dear sir," said Charles,

"to say something more? If the Almighty is pleased to prosper me in the situation in which your goodness has placed me, my means of usefulness will not be small; and be fully assured I shall think it one of my first duties and highest gratifications, to repay to your son the benefits I have received from you. I will keep my eye attentively upon him and his children, and omit no opportunity of doing them good."

"O Charles," cried Mr. Stanley, "what can I give you in return for this, but the prayers of a dying man!" Then lifting up his hands, "Do thou, O Rewarder of all who diligently seek thee,—do thou strengthen and keep this thy true servant: while he continues in this world of trial, let him tread continually in the footsteps of thy beloved Son, going on from grace to grace, till at length thou callest him to those regions of felicity, where thy saints dwell in the light of thy countenance for ever and ever!!"

Charles's heart overflowed with love and gratitude, to this true friend, whom he was sensible he must so soon lose. He would not have left him for a moment day or night, if it could have been avoided; but fortunately he had several patients who required frequent attendance, which forced him to direct his thoughts to other objects, and be from home during a large part of the day. I say fortunately; for, without this relief to his feelings, their acuteness, with the close confinement to a sick-room which they would have occasioned, must have materially affected his health.

Mr. Stanley mentioned Charles's generous wish and intentions concerning her, to his sister, who gratefully agreed to the proposal of remaining with him, adding an earnest prayer, that his tender hand, after having closed the eyes of her beloved brother,

might, when the Almighty saw fit, perform the same kind office for herself.

The younger Mr. Stanley came every day to see his father; but his presence was rather a disturbance than a comfort to him: a few tears, and a few expressions of regret during the last illness of a parent, are a poor compensation for the hours, days, and weeks of misery which an undutiful child must have occasioned. To Charles, Mr. William Stanley had always behaved with a degree of rudeness which would have caused aversion in any bosom less kindly tempered. His excessive pride made him think his family degraded by admitting to their society one of so low an origin; and when this excellent young man was introduced by his father as his associate and full partner in the business, he endeavoured to vilify his character, throw contempt upon his skill, and ridicule upon his person, in all companies where he went: but his malice did little or no injury to Charles; all who knew him could bear witness to his virtues and good sense, and the blow which was aimed at his character by this cruel defamer, recoiled upon himself.

At length the hour arrived which was to release Mr. Stanley from the toils of his earthly pilgrimage: he expired without a struggle, in the arms of his beloved Charles, who, in the height of his grief for so afflicting a loss, bowed in heart-felt gratitude to the Father of mercy for removing him so gently from a state of suffering; and even in those solemn moments when he stood fondly gazing upon the lifeless form of his revered friend, his steady faith enabled him joyfully to look forward to the hour, when what "is sown in weakness" shall be "raised in power," when "this mortal shall put on immortality," and "Death be swallowed up in Victory."

Charles was prevented from indulging, as he wished, the feelings with which the late affecting event

had filled his mind, the calls of his profession refused to let him devote even a single day entirely to reflecting upon his loss: this he felt as a hardship, but in reality it was a benefit; as he was by that means sooner brought into the state of composure which is necessary both to our comfort and usefulness.

Mr. Stanley had left the furniture of his house to his sister, and she insisted upon every article remaining where it stood; which Charles agreed to, on condition that he should pay her the full value, with interest upon it, as soon as he was able; and calling in all the money that he had saved, he found it sufficient for the purchase of all that was necessary of the stock to enable him to carry on the business, and something to begin housekeeping with. Although his prospects with regard to his future income were very flattering, he had so great a dread of getting into debt, or running the least hazard of spending what was not his own, that he resolved to reduce the expenses of his family as much as possible. He accordingly, with Mrs. Stanley's full approbation, parted with one of the two women servants; and, instead of a man in livery, hired a boy who might be useful both in the house and shop; for he had neither time nor inclination for keeping company, and the greatest possible dislike to what is called making a figure in the world; resolving, if the Almighty prospered him, and his riches increased, not to set his heart upon them; but thankfully to employ them as a happy means of forwarding that great work which he justly considered as the principal business of life.

Mr. William Stanley continued to behave with his usual insolence to Charles, and was angry with his aunt for remaining in his house, though his folly and extravagance put it out of his power to offer her a comfortable home in his own; which if he had

done, would certainly have failed to induce her to quit her adopted son, for whom, as his virtues daily increased and unfolded themselves, she felt a daily increasing attachment.

His success in business more than answered his highest expectations: few of Mr. Stanley's friends failed to employ him; and his reputation for skill and attention, with the moderation of his charges, brought him so many new patients, that had not one of his late master's pupils, of whom he had a high opinion, agreed to ~~play~~ ^{work} with him as an assistant, he could not have found time to do them justice, and also attend to the numerous calls of those who had no other payment to offer but thanks and blessings. Had Charles been possessed of a competent fortune, he would have devoted his whole time to patients of the latter description, and this without laying any claim to the merit of disinterestedness, but implicitly trusting in the promise made to those who benefit the poor, "They shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

Indeed, it is astonishing that mere selfishness and common sense do not make men resolve to be real christians: for what comparison can there be between the gains of a man of the world, and those of a truly good man! The one stores up perhaps a hoard of guineas, or lays field to field, increasing his wealth and influence for a few short years, till the unwelcome summons comes, the night in which "his soul will be required from him," and he has then no further concern with them! After all his care and anxiety, the fruit of his labours may fall into the hands of the vain and profligate, and he himself must go to give a solemn account of the time and talents which he has misapplied in heaping it up! while the good man has, during his whole life, been sending treasures to that country where his heart is, and to which he rejoices in the assurance that every hour

brings him more near. He waits patiently for his call to this land of promise, knowing that every day which is lent him here on earth, gives an opportunity of still adding to his store! But when the glad summons comes, how opposite are his feelings to those of the worldly man! Instead of leaving all that he has valued and held dear, he goes to take possession of and rejoice in it throughout the endless ages of eternity!! Nothing surely can be more certain than that the children of this world "disquiet themselves in vain," while they labour "for the meet which perisheth," and neglect to provide themselves with "bags that wax not old," and "food that sustaineth unto everlasting life."

At the end of the second year after the death of Mr. Stanley, Charles found himself in a most prosperous situation: his business, notwithstanding the moderation of his charges, had enabled him to pay the full value for the furniture of his house, maintain his family in plenty, and, with a degree of hospitality often unknown in more splendid mansions, relieve a number of persons suffering under the heavy weight of poverty added to sickness, and lay up something for himself: for he justly considered that his whole income depended upon the continuance of his health, and the soundness of his faculties; and that it was his duty, while these were continued to him, to provide against the time of their decline. His plan was to save such a sum as would insure him an income on which he could live in comfort and independence; and when this was done, he resolved to put by no more, but open his hand as widely as Providence gave him the means to do, in relieving the wants of his afflicted brethren.

Thus worthily, prosperously, and happily was he going on, when, as he returned home one evening, expecting the usual enjoyment of his quiet and comfortable fire-side after a busy day, a letter was put

tune, and universally beloved and respected! What a chill came over my whole frame when I heard this! The contrast between our conditions, notwithstanding the vast advantages of every kind that I always had over you, struck upon my heart, and brought forcibly to my remembrance a passage in that book which I have neglected and despised, 'Verily there is a reward for the righteous, doubtless there is a God who judgeth the earth.'

"I knew you too well to doubt, if I applied to you, that you would even yet assist me, and I might perhaps still have got a situation where, with sobriety and industry, I might support my family in credit: but I never loved business, and I now detest it! How can he resolve upon a sober life, who has no relief from the misery of self-reproach but in the madness or stupor of intoxication! No, no, I must follow my horrible destiny, though I shudder to think whither it may lead me.

"Prepare yourself now to hear of the last and most fatal of my crimes. Pressed by my creditors, knowing that I had not enough to satisfy them, and expecting every day to be shut up in a prison, from which I could never hope to be released, I was driven to such desperation that I committed a forgery!

"I will not give you the particulars of this shameful affair; it is enough to say that it has been discovered, and I am flying for my life, which, should I be taken, is justly forfeited to my country. I am at this time in a disguise, at a seaport town, hiding my guilty head from the light of day and from the sight of every human creature, till the sailing of a vessel, in which, happening to have a note of considerable value about me, I have agreed for a passage; I will not say to what country; for, if I succeed in escaping, you will never again hear from or of me. I can never return to my native land; nor, if you grant

my last request, and I know you too well to doubt it, shall you ever have any other misery from me. You already guess what I would have—My wife and child!! O my brother, on you they entirely depend! To you I leave them, and with entire dependence that you will do more for them than I could have courage to ask.

"Providence, I trust, will permit my escape, that you may not suffer the agony and disgrace which would be brought upon you, and upon my innocent child, by my death upon—O Charles! I cannot write the horrible, the detested word. Thinking of the state to which I have reduced myself, drives me almost to madness; and, in the depth of my despair, I was near doing that dreadful deed which can never be repented of! Yes, I should have put an end to my wretched life, and rushed, guilty as I am, uncalled into the presence of my Maker, had not what I once heard you say on that subject flashed suddenly across my mind, and put so horrible an end, in its true colours, before my eyes. To you then I owe what chance still remains for repentance and pardon.

"This is, alas! the last time that I shall ever unburden my heart to a true friend; and though I had resolved against it, I will tell you the particulars of my wretchedness. Two nights ago, as I was carousing with my usual gay companions, a paper was put into my hand from one whom I little regarded, which informed me, that a certain banker had laid an information against me upon a charge of forgery, and that the search for me was already begun. I started up, hardly knowing what I did, and was flying rather than walking towards my own house, when my recollection suddenly returning, I became sensible that I should probably meet the officers of justice there; and turning rapidly into another direction, I went on for some time almost in a state of insanity: but

that good fortune which used to be my boast, did not here desert me: I found myself opposite to the house of a man who dealt in old clothes;—a thought instantly struck me, and finding the man at home, I hastily fitted myself from his wardrobe, with those which I thought would most effectually disguise me, and, leaving my own in exchange, set out as fast as my legs would carry me, and soon lost sight of London. As I walked along, I formed my plan, which was, if possible, to get to the sea-side, and so out of the kingdom. I felt a ray of hope and comfort from this idea; but the thoughts of what I left behind, of never again beholding my child, felt like a dagger to my heart. Before this time I hardly knew that I loved her; but she now seemed dearer than life, and I would freely have run the risk of losing it by any means but the detested one of a public execution, to have once more pressed this precious injured creature to my bosom. But I had no choice; and, tearing myself away, travelled all night; and when day appeared, dreading the sight of a human being, and fancying every sound I heard the feet of my pursuers, I struck into woods and by-paths, hardly daring to throw myself upon the ground for rest, though fainting with fatigue and exhausted by hunger. I ventured to purchase a little bread as I passed hastily through a village in the course of the day, and allayed my burning thirst with such water as I met with on my way. Late at night I reached this place, and, though I shrunk from the sight of a human face, was compelled by fearful necessity to go to a house for shelter and refreshment, and try to secure the projected means of my escape, which, as I was fortunately able to offer a large bribe, I trust has been effected.

“O Charles, the time approaches, and I must hasten to conclude; the ship in which I hope to fly sails in a few hours, and I am now so much agitated as hardly to be able to write. I know, my good, my

incomparable brother, that you will feel deeply anxious, before I bid you a last adieu, to know something more than I have yet told you of the state of my mind. I will not deceive you at this solemn moment—I hate myself; I hate my former life; I hate even life itself, and would fling it from me with disdain, did not my soul shrink back with dread of what must follow! Happy, happy brother! you have secured a blessed lot in both worlds; while I, wretch that I am, have lost all hope in either! Can this horrible feeling, this miserable apathy, be repentance? Ah no; I feel no love of God, I do not dare to love him, I can only tremble at his power! O that I could reform, that I could new-mould my heart, that I could make it resemble yours! But I feel it hard, and callous to all that is good; long habits of evil press it down, my soul seems to have lost its noble faculties, and to have reduced itself to a level with the brutes that perish!

“It is for your sake, I am persuaded, that I am rescued from death; the misery of knowing that your brother died by the hands of an executioner will be spared you, and my wife and innocent child will escape the deep disgrace:—were my cold heart capable of gratitude, I would return thanks for that.

“The night wears fast away, and I must, with a trembling hand and breaking heart, bid you a long, a last adieu! In this world we can never meet again, and O, what hope, what prospect have I beyond the grave!

“This is an awful moment; I am parting for ever from my only friend, from him who would have rescued me from destruction, and made me an angel like himself! O my brother, I write this upon my knees. May that God whom you adore shower down all his precious blessings on your head, here and hereafter; and may no thought of me, the wretched wanderer, interrupt your bliss! I only ask your

prayers, without daring to say that I will deserve them. Farewell, dearest, best of brothers, once again, farewell!"

Poor Charles had been so agitated as he read this letter, that when he came to its conclusion his reason seemed for a while overpowered, and he remained some time in a state of torpor near to insensibility. This stupor would probably have lasted longer, had not Mrs. Stanley, gently tapped at the door, and told him that tea waited for him. He heard the summons; but, unconscious of its meaning, answered by a deep sigh, or rather groan; which so much alarmed his kind friend, that she hastily opened the door, and hurrying to him, "You are ill, my dear child," she exclaimed, "you are very ill!"

This brought back his recollection; and pointing to the letter, which lay on the ground, "Read that," cried he, "read that heart-rending paper!"

She took it up with trembling hands, and while she perused the contents, his eyes were fixed upon her face; but his mind again became nearly vacant, and he would have relapsed into his former state of insensibility, had not this tender friend taken his passive hand, and seating herself by him, "How much have we to be thankful for, my dear Charles," said she, "in the contents of this letter! Your brother's life has been wonderfully preserved, time given him for repentance, and his heart seems at length to be really touched."

"No, no," cried Charles, "all that is contained in that fatal paper chills my soul! Has he not committed a crime, by which his very life is forfeited?"

"That is too true," replied she; "but the Almighty has granted him a further time of trial, and he finished that writing on his knees praying for blessings upon you."

"Give me the paper," cried he hastily, "and leave me, my dear madam, leave me to examine its

contents more perfectly; one horrid idea has so fully taken possession of my mind, that I hardly know what besides it may contain."

Mrs. Stanley put the letter into his hand, and, begging him to compose his mind, left the room.

During this second perusal he felt less agitation; and when he had finished, "O thou Father of mercy, thou God of all consolation," said he, looking devoutly upward, "may the pangs which he suffers be the coals of fire, which thou in love art heaping on his head, to melt a heart hitherto so hard, so frozen! My weak efforts were in vain, but Thou art powerful, and to Thee I leave him. Yes, my brother, to whatever region thou bendeest thy dreary course, God will meet thee there! He is still present, and if thou wilt turn to him with all thy soul, 'though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall be whiter than snow!'"

He now shed a plentiful shower of tears: his heart, which before seemed ready to burst, was relieved, and he breathed more freely: he persuaded himself that Robert's letter gave much ground to hope that a blessed change had already begun to take place in him, and recollecting what Mrs. Stanley had said, he took it down stairs to her, hoping by her favourable opinion more fully to confirm his own. This excellent woman justly observed, that there was more hope of his reformation from his backwardness to promise, than if he had been confident in the strength of his newly formed resolutions; that it was evident his eyes were now open; that he saw vice in her true colours, and was fully sensible of the delights, as well as the advantages, of a virtuous life. "True," replied Charles, "his afflictions have removed the mist, which youth, high spirits, and a tide of good fortune had raised before his sight; and O how ardently do I pray, that, warned by his escape from the horrible darkness which had so nearly overwhelmed him, he may keep his eyes still fixed upon

that blessed light, which increaseth more and more, and leads unto the perfect day!"

These consoling reflections by degrees brought his mind into a state of composure, which fitted him to consider what could best be done for the widow and orphan of his brother, for such they might too justly be termed. At first he thought of going immediately to London, and bringing them to his house, which he, without hesitation, pronounced their future home, if he could make it comfortable to them; but Mrs. Stanley reminded him that an absence of several days would not be possible to him without material injury to his business, and kindly proposed to undertake the journey herself. Charles thankfully accepted the offer: it was agreed that she should set out the following morning; and as the letter contained a direction to the house which Robert had last inhabited, she had no doubt but by inquiring there she should be able to find them.

How grateful was Charles to the "Giver of all good gifts," for the ability he possessed to offer a home to this unhappy woman and her innocent babe; and that by his industry he should probably be enabled to provide them a future maintenance! He delighted in the prospect of adopting his brother's child, and his affectionate heart already felt something like a paternal love towards her. His mind became every hour more composed and satisfied, he felt himself called upon to perform fresh duties, and he rejoiced in every opportunity which was graciously afforded him to testify his devotedness to God, by acts of kindness to his fellow-creatures.

On the second day after Mrs. Stanley's departure a coach drove up to the door, and a gentleman stepped out inquiring for Mr. Waring: he was shown into a parlour, and Charles immediately attended him, "My name, sir," said the stranger, "is Hammond; you have probably heard frequently of me, but till yesterday I never knew that you existed. I

then received a letter from your unhappy brother, unfolding many circumstances of his early life, and relating the noble part which you took in the restoration of the pocket-book, which first introduced him to me. He does not attempt to conceal, or even palliate, his own crimes, but has laid open before me the whole scheme of fraud and hypocrisy, by which he for so many years deceived me, and in the end completed his own ruin. To your character and conduct he has done such ample justice, that I was impatient to become acquainted with, and to consult you on the best means of disposing of his destitute wife and child."

Charles was so much surprised and affected by what Mr. Hammond said, that he was unable to return an immediate answer; and he went on:—

"Your brother tells me, sir, that you have uniformly disapproved, and, as far as it was in your power, counteracted all his bad propensities; and particularly that you renounced all connexion with him upon his marriage with my niece."

"Ah, sir," cried Charles, "the whole of his conduct to you, his most kind and generous benefactor, must raise the indignation of every feeling mind; but he is now paying the bitter penalty due to such deeds; and as he has done the little that was in his power, by fully confessing his faults, I trust that you will pity and forgive him."

"My present sentiments with regard to him," returned Mr. Hammond, "are of little importance: I was once most partially his friend; and, had he been in reality what he then appeared to me, I should hardly have known a difference in my affection towards him, and that which I feel for a beloved and deserving son. A few years would certainly have admitted him into a share of my extensive and profitable business, and I should, perhaps, have then had no objection even to his becoming the husband of my niece. But I rejoice that such villany has been

unmasked.—No truth is more certain to be verified in the end, than that ‘the hope of the hypocrite shall perish.’”

Charles was silent, and Mr. Hammond went on: “I find from his own account, that your brother has not only spent every shilling of his wife’s fortune, but has incurred large debts besides; so that she and her child are left entirely without support. What do you mean to do with respect to them?”

“I have already sent a dear and respected friend to fetch them here,” answered Charles; “to my frugal board they will be freely welcome: and if such a home as this is far below the claims to which your niece was once entitled, it will perhaps be thought a safe and happy asylum for the forlorn wife of my wretched brother. His daughter I mean to adopt as my own, and I trust that I shall be enabled in a few years to make a decent provision for her future maintenance.”

“Your intentions are good and generous,” replied Mr. Hammond, “but you should well consider what you undertake.”

“I mean, sir,” answered Charles, “to act on this occasion as I have endeavoured to do on all others, according to what I believe to be my duty, leaving the consequences to Him who over-rules all events. I am blessed with more than my own necessities require, and surely no claim can call more forcibly upon me than this. I trust, that your niece will allow me to direct the education of my adopted child; without that, I should have no right to expect more worth in her, than commonly appears in others. But there is a school, in which, if I am permitted early to place her, she can hardly fail to become every thing that I wish.”

“Her mother,” replied Mr. Hammond, “cannot, I think, refuse to let you please yourself in that respect, as the expense will be entirely your own.”

“It is the School of Piety that I mean,” said Charles. “If I can lead her to give her first affec-

tions to God, to view herself as an heir of immortality, now only in the first stage of existence, in which we are called upon, and graciously enabled, to become fit for a state far more happy and glorious! if I can open her eyes fully to perceive that it is her true interest to employ this short life in an active and diligent preparation for that eternal one to which we are rapidly advancing, my work will be done; she will be a blessing to me, and to all within her reach."

"Will there not be danger," interrupted Mr. Hammond, "in giving her this early and strong sense of piety, of making her a visionary enthusiast, looking down upon a world in which she will be entirely useless?"

"Far, far from it," replied Charles; "her religion will be the pure, practical, religion of the Gospel! She will hold no mystical, no enthusiastic tenets; but, striving to imitate the example of our blessed Redeemer, and full of faith in his words, seek no other mode of entering into life but that which he has pointed out, keeping the commandments. In the true and genuine religion of Jesus, all is simple, and easy to be understood; the beginning and the end of his doctrines, the whole scope of his preaching, is to inspire us with ardent love, veneration, and gratitude to God, and active good-will to our fellow-creatures."

"I wish," answered Mr. Hammond, "I sincerely wish that your ideas on this subject were more generally diffused: there is much of a formal outside kind of religion in the world, but little, I fear, which resembles that which was taught and practised by Christ and his apostles."

"I came here to-day," continued he, "not perfectly convinced that your brother did not again intend to deceive me, in his representation of your admirable character; but I have not a doubt remaining: it is impossible to converse with you, and to

look upon your open ingenuous countenance, without giving full credit to all that he has said."

Mr. Hammond then held out his hand: "I freely offer you my friendship," said he; "call upon me on any and on all occasions in which I can be useful to you, and be assured I shall rejoice in the opportunity."

Charles was much affected, and respectfully thanked him; after which Mr. Hammond again addressed him:

"I should be most ungenerous if I permitted you to be at the whole expense of providing for my niece and her child. Towards the maintenance of the former, you must allow me to contribute a hundred pounds a year; it shall be settled upon you for her life; for to herself I will never give a shilling. I insist upon all that she has coming from you; it will increase your influence with her, and be doubly beneficial to her and to her child."

"Dear sir," cried Charles, "permit me earnestly to object to this; I cannot consent to dispense your bounty, as if it were my own. It will be doubly acceptable to your niece, when she knows that it comes from you; and for the influence which I wish to acquire, I will trust to the kindness which she will experience from me."

"You will find yourself deceived in your expectations," said Mr. Hammond, "she is of a selfish, unfeeling character; and, if she had a tolerable income at her disposal, would give her daughter a showy education, and make your house a place of fashionable resort."

After a conversation of some length, it was finally settled that Charles should receive fifty pounds a year, and that the same sum should be paid to the lady; he insisted, however, that she should know to whom she was obliged for both; for he could not bear to receive thanks for that which was the bounty of another. Mr. Hammond was not satisfied with

making this liberal allowance during the life of the mother, but begged Charles to accept of five hundred pounds, to be laid by and managed as he thought proper, for the benefit of the child: and to complete his generosity, he told him to set his heart at ease with respect to his brother's debts, as he would immediately settle with the creditors, and take care that no one should be a loser by the husband of his niece.

Thus was Charles most unexpectedly relieved from all anxiety respecting a future provision for the wife and daughter of his wandering brother. At the time that he expected them, they arrived; Mrs. Waring apparently much out of health, and in very low spirits; but the little Lucy was just turned three years old, full of that sweet and innocent gaiety which belongs to careless infancy. He was greatly affected with the strong resemblance which she bore to her father in his early days, before bad passions and vicious habits had cast a shade over a countenance formed in one of nature's most perfect moulds. The child immediately attached herself to him; when he was from home, she was continually inquiring about, and watching for his return, and he was hardly seated, before her arms were held out petitioning to be placed on that highest pinnacle of her ambition, her uncle's knee. She soon became the darling of his heart, and he lost no time in beginning to lay the foundation in her mind, for the lovely structure of piety and virtue which he hoped to erect there.

Charles grieved to perceive in his sister-in-law evident and alarming symptoms of a rapid decline, and exerted all his skill to check their progress: but the discontented state of her mind rendered him from the first almost hopeless of success. Her life had been devoted to self-indulgence, and the wretched effect had been, that her passions daily gained strength, her reason became weaker, and she was now utterly unable to support the afflicting trials to which she

was called. He endeavoured to soothe her by the tenderest assurances of kindness and protection to herself and her child, and dwelt on the recent proof of regard which she had received from her uncle: but she had a heart little capable of gratitude, resented Mr. Hammond's not coming to visit her, and thought she rather did Charles a favour by accepting of his attentions, than owed him any thing to him for bestowing them. To Mrs. Stanley, who strove to contribute to her comfort by every possible means, she behaved with a chilling coldness, never conversing with her but in the language of discontent, and on the subject of her own complaints and misfortunes.

Many were the efforts made by her kind brother to bring her into a better state of mind; his chief wish was to prepare her, as far as was now possible, for the awful change to which he believed her rapidly approaching; but she had always hitherto avoided thinking upon serious subjects, calling them gloomy and dismal; and now that her mind was weakened by illness, and harassed by discontent, nothing of the kind could be introduced without throwing her into a painful agitation, which usually ended in an hysteric fit.

Thus was this young woman, by the thoughtless dissipation of her former life, deprived in the time of her greatest need of the sweet consolation which piety never fails to bestow! She fled with horror from the thoughts of what might have been her comfort and support,—the approach of death!—But it is not in old age, or during a last illness, that we should make our first acquaintance with this king of terrors, as he is often called, and will too surely be found by the sinful and the thoughtless. During youth and health, we should frequently think of and prepare ourselves to meet him. To the real Christian he brings the glad tidings of speedy admission into his Father's heavenly kingdom: Will he not then hail his coming as the conclusion of his troubles,

and the commencement of his felicity? Does the prisoner dread the approach of him who unbars the door of his cell, and gives him perfect liberty? Will the Christian, full of faith in the glorious promises of the gospel, fear to put off his "earthly tabernacle," when he knows that there is reserved for him "a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens! "

In less than six months Mrs. Waring was carried to the grave. Her excellent friend had done every thing that was possible for her ease and comfort: he had even prevailed upon Mr. Hammond to come repeatedly to see her; and had she been really all that he wished, he could not have more earnestly endeavoured to prolong her life; indeed, in that case, he would probably have been far less anxious; for the object nearest to his heart, and the chief motive for his unceasing exertions, was the hope that she might be brought to a sense of her faults, and an earnest desire to amend them, before she was called to the awful tribunal of Him to whose gracious teachings she had hitherto refused to listen. But the all-wise Disposer of events had ordered it otherwise, and on this, as on all other occasions, he bowed in profound submission to his will.

In a few weeks after this melancholy occurrence, the family recovered its usual state of comfort and cheerfulness: indeed Charles was now happier than he had ever been in his life. With respect to his brother, he had reason for better hopes than at any former time: he had been fully convinced of his faults, and had felt their dreadful consequences; he was, as it were, beginning life again in a new world; and he could scarcely conceive it possible for a man favoured by the Almighty as he had been, and suffering as he had done, to return to a vicious course of life: his mind was therefore more at ease with respect to Robert than it had been for many years before; and remembering him daily in his

prayers, he committed his future destiny with humble confidence to the mercy of their common Father.

To his niece he attached himself with all the warmth of paternal affection; but without that blind partiality which too often accompanies it. He watched over her opening mind, encouraged every good and generous feeling; and repressed in its infancy every idea that could tend to evil. Mrs. Stanley approved of all his plans, and seconded them to the utmost of her power, so that his excellent instructions were not obliterated from her mind in his absence: evil was never pictured to her as good, nor good represented as evil: she was never deceived; therefore her mind gained strength, and became the abode of truth. What Lucy said was always to be depended upon: her uncle was fully persuaded, that this love of truth was a solid foundation for every virtue, and that his future progress with her would be easy and delightful.

Charles was not unmindful of the last promise he had made to his dying friend and benefactor: he watched for opportunities of doing good to the family of Mr. Stanley. Though he was treated by the young gentleman with a neglect bordering upon rudeness, he continued to visit him, and attended his wife and children through a dangerous illness, without being offered even thanks by the ungrateful husband and father.

At length, however, an accident happened which humbled this unfeeling man. He had been all his life passionately fond of horses, and a large part of his income had been wasted in the purchase and maintenance of these expensive animals. He did not, indeed, keep a stud purposely for the turf; but he often engaged in private matches, and had lost much money in betting upon them. On one of these occasions, when he rode his favourite hunter for fifty guineas against a horse which had won several plates, he was thrown from his seat; and his head

being dashed upon a stone, the skull was fractured, and scarce a hope of his life remained. It was with no small difficulty that he was conveyed home; and his wife, half distracted with terror, sent instantly for Charles; who immediately called in the first surgeon in the city to his assistance, and at the same time procured a nurse, on whom he could depend, to share with Mrs. Stanley the great care and fatigue which he knew must be incurred if the patient's life was spared. He continued for several weeks in a state of extreme danger; during which time Charles never failed to visit him twice every day. He well knew that the expense attendant upon such an illness must be very inconvenient to a family so ill prepared to meet difficulties of any kind, and supplied Mrs. Stanley with a considerable sum of money, requesting her to say nothing for the present about it to her husband, who might repay him whenever it was conveniently in his power. Of that, however, he had not the least hope or expectation; but to be useful to the son of his late dear master, was the highest delight to his grateful heart.

At length Mr. Stanley was pronounced out of danger, and the surgeon and nurse were dismissed; but he was still in a state of weakness, from which it was not expected that he would ever recover: his head was particularly affected, often to such a degree that he could not walk across a room without assistance, and it was probable that he would never again be able to attend to any kind of business; or, which seemed to him the greater evil of the two, to mount a horse, or drive a carriage, which he had hitherto considered as the principal enjoyments of life. The very kind and friendly conduct of Charles in this time of affliction, the unwearied tenderness with which he had attended daily at his bed-side for many weeks, soothing his mind and relieving the pains of his body, and the generosity which he had displayed, (for his wife had told him all,) had at length a power-

ful effect even upon his hard heart. He, like other men of his description, had lived amongst pleasant gay companions, who were ready to rejoice with him in the days of thoughtless prosperity, but had before formed no idea of the character of a real friend; one who doubles his kindness in the hour of distress, and, by sharing our griefs, so wonderfully lightens their pressure:—and that he should find this comfort, this relief, from Charles Waring, the man whom he had despised, had vilified, and endeavoured in various ways to injure, was to his worldly mind quite unaccountable! He knew, indeed, that to return good for evil was enjoined as a sacred duty by the great Master whom we all profess to follow; but he had never observed this precept acted upon in the circles he frequented, and believed it required a degree of virtue beyond the reach of modern times.

In Charles, however, he saw exemplified the character of a real Christian; and it is impossible to behold any thing so benevolent, so amiable, without loving it.

The earliest appearance of this softened disposition of mind in Mr. Stanley was joyfully hailed by his friend, who lost no time in recommending to him an honest and able man to settle his affairs, and that he should withdraw himself from a business which he was no longer capable of carrying on; and he next persuaded him to sell his gig and horses, and make many other retrenchments in his expenses. This would not easily have been brought about, had not the melancholy state of his health made him despair of being again able to enjoy them; for, though he well knew that the property his father left him had been wasting every year since his death, and that it must reduce his family to poverty, he could not have resolved upon denying himself any of those indulgences which the miserable habits of many years had rendered necessary to him. Charles

did not know the exact state of his affairs; but after the regulations he had made, and considering the increased economy of his wife, he hoped his income would in future be equal to his expenses.

This excellent young man did not stop here: he was desirous not only to put his worldly affairs into a better condition, but to assist him in the more difficult, and still more necessary, task of mending his heart and life. Now that he had by a long series of kind offices gained his confidence, and apparently a good degree of influence over his mind, he resolved to try whether he could lead it to the knowledge of God; to love the bountiful Bestower of all good, and fear to offend Him in whose hand is every living creature, to be governed at his will. He watched carefully for the most favourable opportunities of introducing this interesting subject, and was not easily discouraged; but after repeated trials found him still cold and insensible, desirous immediately to change the discourse, and if it was continued, growing impatient and peevish. He appeared to have no power of comprehending any thing which did not relate to the world that he saw before his eyes: long habits of thoughtlessness and vice seemed to have taken from him both the power and inclination for rising to those noble and lofty heights for which the human mind is designed and fitted by its benevolent Creator. He chose to grovel in the dust, rather than rise amongst the stars; to consider himself as the restless, weak, decaying creature of a day, rather than the heir of immortality, within whose reach is placed a "crown of glory which fadeth not away."

Charles lamented the ill success of his efforts, but did not desist from doing him the good that was in his power, because he would not suffer him to do all that he wished. He had four fine children, who had been hitherto neglected by their father, and excessively indulged by their mother: these he prevailed

upon them to send to good day-schools. Of the eldest boy he became particularly fond, on account of his open generous disposition, and the striking resemblance which he bore to his late dear master; and resolved, as soon as he was of a proper age, to prevail upon his father to give him entirely into his hands, that he might take him into his family, and bring him up to his business; delighting in the opportunity of thus returning to him the benefits he had received from his worthy grandfather.

Thus, in a continued succession of good actions, passes the life of this excellent man; adorning his Christian profession, enjoying as much happiness as this unsatisfying world is able to bestow, and looking forward with increasing joy to that change for which every succeeding day, by adding to his virtues, contributes still better to prepare him. It is now ten years since he received his adopted daughter, his darling Lucy, into his house. Her disposition and character seem exactly modelled after his own; she loves him with the most tender and ardent affection; and, young as she is, enters into all his views and intentions, and possesses his entire confidence. She conducts his house with the utmost care and regularity under the direction of Mrs. Stanley, whose advanced age and increasing infirmities render such a relief very desirable, and pays her the same kind and respectful attention which she might claim from a dutiful daughter.

Mr. Stanley still continues in an ill state of health, suffering much himself, and, by his impatience and peevishness, rendering his life a heavy burthen to his family. About five years ago he gave a striking proof of the extreme selfishness of his disposition, by sinking fifteen hundred pounds to purchase an annuity of two hundred pounds a year for his own life. His whole remaining property does not amount to more than two thousand pounds; so that, though he had secured a good income for himself, he will leave

his wife and children but slenderly provided for. But the perfect reliance they place upon the friendship of Charles, sets their hearts at ease. The eldest son, who is now seventeen, has been with him four years; and, next to his darling Lucy, is the object of his tenderest affection. He is a young man of an excellent capacity and pleasing manners; and, looking up to Mr. Waring as the wisest and best of human beings, he forms his principles and regulates his conduct upon the same solid foundation of ardent piety to God, and active good will to his fellow creatures. As might naturally be expected, the young people are greatly attached to each other, and their friend looks forward with much satisfaction to a future period, when, if no change in their inclinations or conduct takes place, they may be united; and, remaining in his house, be the support and comfort of his latter days. Mr. Stanley's young st son has been two years in Mr. Hammond's counting-house, and appears likely to resemble his brother. The daughters are still at home; for though their excellent friend wished to place them advantageously in business, and they were themselves desirous of it, their father's absurd pride made him refuse to consent:—his life however is not likely to be long, and as they are yet very young the plan will probably be still executed.

Thus will every part of Mr. Stanley's family be put into respectable and prosperous situations by the friendly exertions of one, who was taken into it from motives of charity and compassion.

O Gratitude! thou most lovely of all the virtues, how natural, how suitable and becoming art thou to a creature so frail, so weak and helpless, yet so nobly endowed, so highly favoured, as man! and how surely wilt thou flourish, and abound, in a heart whose earliest and warmest affections have been poured out in thankful adoration to Him who is the bountiful Bestower of all that we have, and the inexhaustible Source of all that we hope for!

AFTER perusing the history of these two brothers, I scarcely need ask my readers, which appears most likely to secure prosperity here and hereafter,—Good Luck, or Good Conduct. The first is not in our own power; is given in a high degree to few; and, as we have just seen, may be rendered of no use or value if it is not attended by the second. But good conduct, which is within the reach of every one, can seldom fail to answer largely even in this life. It was hardly possible to have more disadvantages in a worldly point of view than Charles Waring set out with, and nothing that can be properly called luck has ever favoured him; yet where will you find a more respectable, a more prosperous, or a happier man? He is spoken well of by all who know him; he is ardently beloved by his family and friends; he has the prayers of the poor;—and, to crown all, the blessing of God dwells in his house, is “about his path” and “about his bed,” and accompanies him in all his ways!

Follow then, my good readers, in your several stations, resolutely follow his example. Loving the Lord your God with all the heart, and believing in the gospel of Jesus Christ with all the soul, be just and kind in all your dealings; “visit the fatherless and widows in their afflictions, and keep yourselves unspotted from the world.” So shall ye pass through this transitory life, respected and loved, to that region of unbounded and never-ending felicity, which our Almighty Father hath promised to the true disciples and followers of his holy and beloved Son.

THE END.

H. H. H. H. H. H. H.

ON

INTEMPERANCE.

Strong drink is raging.—SOLOMON.

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ON INTEMPERANCE.

Strong drink is raging.—SOLOMON.

THE friends of religion and humanity throughout our country, have long seen, and deeply lamented, the intemperate use of intoxicating liquors. They have, also, long been convinced, that something ought to be done to effect a reformation;—to cure, if possible, such as are already infected, and, if not, at least to prevent the further spread of the deadly contagion. Nor have the wise and good, in time past, altogether contented themselves with unavailing regrets and good wishes. A kind of desultory warfare has been carried on against the common enemy, with various success.

But the great destroyer has been steadily gaining ground. Our taverns and our grave yards are filled with its trophies. Not content with extending its ravages, and multiplying its triumphs among the refuse of society, it has invaded all ranks, and made awful havoc of property, genius, learning, reputation, and happiness. It is an enemy, which sparing neither high nor low, seems in this country, to be waging a war of extermination. Thousands of husbands has it already torn from the bosom of their families; thousands of sons from the embraces of their parents. Like the “croaking plagues of Egypt,” it has found its way into the very bed chambers of the rich and the poor, the public officer and the private citizen.

Even magistrates themselves, the appointed guardians of the laws, have not always escaped. Nay more, this audacious and deadly foe to the bodies and souls of men, has leaped over the pale of the church, polluted the sanctuary, and, (how shall it be spoken?) has numbered among its victims ministers of the Gospel.

Intemperance is certainly, at the present time, one of the most demoralizing, loathsome, heaven-provoking abominations of this country. Every body, who has either eyes or ears, must admit that here, at least, *strong drink is raging*. The experience of thousands proves, that it is like a fire shut up in the bones. It allows its votaries no ease. It consumes the best estates, often with a rapidity resembling that of a conflagration. It rages like a burning fever in the body, like a wild beast in the family, and like a sweeping pestilence in the community. Profaneness, gambling, lewdness, poverty, disgrace, lawsuits, brutal stupidity, raving distraction, despair, murder, and suicide, march in its train. Many years ago, an eminent physician of Philadelphia gave it as his opinion, that more than four thousand of our citizens were annually hurried to an untimely grave, by the hand of this ruthless destroyer. The evil has increased since that time. Already there is good reason to believe, have intoxicating liquors cost the United States more lives than their independence; demoralized more persons, broken more hearts, beggared more families, and sent more souls to perdition than any other single vice.

If nothing more were necessary, than a general statement of the evils of intemperance and the importance of a reformation, the preceding remarks might suffice. But it would be doing the subject great injustice to dismiss it here, especially as in that case, many would, probably, look upon the foregoing dreadful picture as very much overdrawn. The writer is confident, that every thing which has been advanced can be supported, without a very extensive or minute investigation. To this end he solicits a candid hearing, while he proceeds to specify more particularly some of the legion of evils, which are produced by ardent spirits in this country.

1. Look at their deadly effects upon the bodies of their infatuated victims. Physicians all agree that

intemperance has a direct tendency to destroy health, and shorten life. In a vast multitude of instances, it is the legitimate parent of fevers, dropsies, consumption, gout, palsy, and apoplexy. "Ardent spirits," says Dr. Rush, (and so says almost every other physician,) "dispose the body to acute diseases in every form, and excite fevers in persons predisposed to them from other causes. Thus, when yellow fevers have visited the cities of the United States, hard drinkers have seldom escaped, and rarely recovered."

The same remark has been made concerning the most alarming and fatal diseases, which have, within a few years past, prevailed in different parts of the country. The writer has been assured, that hard drinkers have been remarkably singled out by the destroying angel; and that, in some places, not an individual of this class has recovered from an attack. Go then to the bed-side of a neighbour or a friend, who has long been laying up, in his system, the fuel of ardent spirits to feed the fever that now consumes him. Perhaps he was never called a drunkard. It may be that he was never completely intoxicated. But he drank regularly and freely. Now behold him on the brink of eternity. His tongue is parched. His brain is disordered. His disease, which he might have escaped by temperance, or which, had he been temperate, would have yielded to the power of medicine, is now incurable. His eye grows dim; he struggles; he gasps; he expires; and in him you behold the fate of vast numbers, who follow the same course.

Shall we proceed further, and point you to ten thousand shadows of human existence in the last stages of various other diseases brought on by excessive drinking? Shall we undertake to count the miserable creatures, who are every year tortured to death by this vulture? Shall we press physicians to tell us how many names, on our annual bills of

mortality, are inscribed there by the hand of this fell destroyer? Shall we go from grave to grave, in the fields of the dead, and ask tomb-stones how many victims of ardent spirits, lie beneath them? Ah! if tomb-stones might tell the truth, how affecting would be their report!

Let us take another view of this subject. It will not be questioned that health and life are often destroyed by strong drink, in many ways which have not yet been mentioned. *Who*, saith the royal preacher, *hath wo? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine.* Hard drinking is the parent of almost every crime that can be named, and exposes its votaries to dangers and deaths wherever they go. How many have been dragged from the grog-shop to prison, and from prison to the gallows? How many, in fits of drunkenness, have had their limbs broken, and been miserably crippled for life! How many, in attempting to return from the tavern, have reeled from their horses into eternity! How often is the drunkard found stretched by the way side, on the cold and damp earth; exposed to the wheels of the hasty traveller; wet with the dew of heaven; shivering under the piercing blasts of winter, or perhaps lying stiff in the iron slumber of death!

2. The enormous consumption of ardent spirits in this country involves an incredible waste of property. When the Marshals took the census in 1810, they were directed to collect and return to the Secretary's office, the amount of all domestic manufactures, of any considerable importance, in the United States. From these returns it appears, that no less than 25,499,382 gallons of ardent spirits were distilled that year; of which were exported 133,843 gallons, leaving 25,365,529 gallons to be consumed at home. The same year about 8,000,000 gallons of rum and

other foreign distilled liquors were imported to this country, which being added to the above 25,365,529, produces an amount of 33,365,529 gallons, for our home consumption in a single year!—Since 1810 it admits not of a doubt, that there has been a steady and rapid increase.—But not to insist on this, let the aggregate of domestic and foreign spirits, stand as above at 33,365,529 gallons; and let it be made the basis of a few plain calculations. Now 33,365,529 gallons, is 248,932 hogsheads, (at more than 134 gallons the hogshead,) which, supposing one team to carry two hogsheads, would load 124,466 waggons. These, allowing only three rods for each team, would reach more than 1,166 miles, or nearly the whole length of the United States, from north to south! The number of hogsheads necessary to contain the liquor, must, upon a moderate computation, cost 600,000 dollars, and would, if placed so as to touch each other, reach more than 178 miles. Or, to present the subject in another light, the quantity of ardent distilled spirits, which is annually drunk in the United States, is sufficient to fill a canal 42 miles long, 10 feet wide and 2 feet deep; affording convenient navigation for boats of several tons burthen!

Now let us, for a moment, view the subject, in connection with the population of this country. According to the census of 1810, the number of inhabitants in the United States and their territorial governments, was 7,230,514. If 33,365,529 gallons were divided equally among the whole population, the process would give not far from 4 gallons and a half to every man, woman, and child—bond and free, in the nation! But here two things are to be considered.

In the first place we have in the United States, 1,185,223 slaves, and as it is their enviable privilege to be denied the use of ardent spirits, they must be taken from the grand total of our population; and

then we shall have left, a little more than 6,000,000 of people to drink more than 33,000,000 gallons of rum, brandy, whiskey, &c.

In the second place, children are to be subtracted. In the state of Connecticut, there are about 73,000 children under ten years of age. Now calculating that the proportion of children under ten years is the same in all the States, we have about 1,670,000 to be subtracted from the 6,000,000 above ; leaving not far from 4,330,000 persons to consume between 33 and 34 million gallons of ardent spirits in a single year ; and making an average of more than 7 gallons and a half, for each consumer !

Here, probably, some readers will stop short, and exclaim, "It is impossible ! There must be some grand mistake in the preceding calculations. The result is too alarming, too humiliating to be admitted as correct." But facts and figures are stubborn things.

Few think how soon a small bottle will drain a hogshead ; or how soon a very small glass will exhaust a bottle. Many may be surprised to hear, that only one half gill of spirits, taken daily, amounts at the year's end, to more than 5 gallons and a half ; a gill to more than 11 gallons ; two gills to 22 gallons, and a pint to the enormous quantity of 45 gallons !

From the *quantity*, let us now turn our attention to the annual *cost* of ardent spirits to the people of this country. When we take into consideration the high price of all imported liquors ; when we consider what quantities of domestic spirits are disguised and sold for French brandy, Holland gin, &c. ; when we recollect that every retailer must make a profit on what he sells ; that thousands of hogsheads are sold in taverns and tippling shops at from two to five or six dollars a gallon, and that the original quantity is greatly increased by the many liberal dilutions which it undergoes, before it reaches the consumer ;

when all these things are considered, the average expense cannot be less than one dollar a gallon, or 33,365,529 dollars annually ! But not to insist on a few hundred thousand dollars, we will let the sum stand in round numbers at 33,000,000. Thirty-three millions of dollars paid out in one year for strong drink ! The weight of this sum in silver dollars would exceed 970 tons. Supposing each of two men to count 60 dollars a minute, during twelve hours of every day, they would not supply the drain. One fourth part of the sum, if levied upon the inhabitants of the United States by direct taxation, would revolutionize the government. How much good might be done with this money, the greatest part of which is now so many thousand times worse than wasted. How surprisingly would it change the face of our country ; how largely might it contribute to the convenience and prosperity of the nation ; if it were expended in making roads, building colleges, hospitals, alms houses, bridges, and churches ; encouraging useful manufactures, forming canals, fortifying our sea-ports, augmenting our navy, instructing the poor, distributing the Bible and other religious books, in our new settlements, establishing libraries, and sending out missionaries.

To illustrate and enforce these considerations, let us descend to particulars: 33,000,000 of dollars would establish 110 public seminaries, giving to each, a fund of 300,000 dollars ; which fund would be amply sufficient to erect the necessary buildings, purchase libraries, and support instructors. Or, if expended in the education of young men, it would handsomely support more than 100,000. in such seminaries. Less than the fifth part of 33,000,000 of dollars, would support 7,230 ministers of the Gospel with an average salary of 700 dollars ; and this would furnish one clergyman to every thousand inhabitants, (including slaves,) in the United States. Much less than half of what is now expended for

strong drink, would support 43,360 schools, allowing each instructor a yearly salary of 300 dollars; which would be six schools for every thousand inhabitants. The simple interest of 33,000,000 of dollars, is more than half sufficient to pay the interest of the national debt, as it stood in 1810; and the principal would totally extinguish that debt, in less than two years. According to an estimate submitted to Congress, by the Secretary of the Navy, last winter, 33,000,000 dollars would build no less than NINETY-NINE ships of the line, so that by appropriating to this grand national object what is expended for ardent spirits, we might, in five years, have a navy superior to that of Great Britain!

Half the sum which is made the basis of these calculations, would maintain more than 25,000 missionaries among the heathen; and the other half would print, for gratuitous distribution, more than 20,000,000 Bibles. Estimating superfine flour at 12 dollars a barrel, the whole sum would purchase 2,750,000 barrels, which, allowing five barrels to a family, would supply 550,000 families with bread through the whole year. With coarser bread the same sum would supply 1,000,000 families. It would also, if appropriated to that object, make 55,000 miles of turnpike road, at 600 dollars a mile; a distance more than twice the circumference of the globe; or it would complete 20 canals, each 100 miles in length, at an expense of 16,500 dollars a mile. Or to present the subject in a little different light, two millions of the thirty-three, would build 200 churches, at an average cost of 10,000 dollars; 5,000,000 would pay nearly one fifth part of the national debt, as it stood in 1810; 10,000,000 would feed and clothe 100,000 poor children, at 100 dollars each per annum: 8,000,000 would establish 8,000 of our industrious young men on farms, each worth 1,000 dollars, in our new settlements, and after all we should have no less than 8,000,000 left, for other public and charitable contributions.

Enough, and more than enough has been said, to demonstrate, that incalculable good might be done with the property, which, being laid out for ardent spirits, actually prepares victims, by thousands, for a never ceasing pestilence.

Let readers apply some of the preceding calculations to their own towns, societies, and families. Take for example, a town containing 2,000 inhabitants. If they consume their share of the whole quantity of ardent spirits, which is drunk in the United States annually, it cannot cost them less than 9,000 dollars! What an immense sum for one small town to pay for strong drink in one year! More than enough to support 5 ministers, 10 schools, and pay every town, state, and county tax. Suppose a tax of 2,000 or 5,000 dollars were laid, for the public benefit, upon such a town: What would the people say? Why every man would cry out against it as intolerable. And yet how cheerfully is the burden sustained for the sake of gratifying an inordinate thirst for strong drink. While it would be impossible in many places to collect 500 dollars for charitable purposes, voluntary contributions; of more than twenty times the amount, are made in the same places, every year, to purchase fevers, consumptions, and a host of other diseases, together with poverty, wretchedness, infamy and death.

In the foregoing calculations, no account has been made of the loss of time, which is inseparable from such an amazing consumption of ardent spirits. This must amount to many millions of dollars annually. With such facts in view, it is easy to account for much of the poverty that exists in this land. Thousands and thousands of families are literally reduced to beggary by intemperance. Business neglected, shops deserted, buildings going to decay, sheriff's fees, long court dockets, crowded prisons, houses stripped of their furniture, and at length sold to pay tavern-bills, children crying for bread and

shivering with the cold ; these, *these* are some of the vouchers, for the truths of what has been advanced. Facts of this distressing character show, from whence a very large part of this impoverishing revenue is drawn. It is made up of money which should feed the hungry, and clothe the naked ; which should cherish the fatherless, and cause the widow's heart to sing for joy. It is money which should educate the poor, support the Gospel at home, and assist in extending the light of Divine truth among the heathen, in every part of the world.

3. The effects of intemperate drinking upon the disposition, as well as the estates of its victims, are often terrible. It converts the gentleness of the lamb, into the ferocity of the tiger. Under its malignant influence, persons, who used to be distinguished for kindness and habitual equanimity of temper, become excessively morose, and irritable. It dethrones reason and lets loose all the bad passions, to range and rage without controul. It more than brutalizes the whole man, and often causes the unhappy subject of its influence to vent the most outrageous abuse, upon the nearest relations and the best friends.

How frequently, for example, does strong drink drown conjugal, parental, filial, and fraternal love. How many husbands, who once cherished the most tender affection for their wives, have gradually exchanged it for the love of intoxicating liquors ! How many wives, once lovely and beloved, have, in the course of a few months or years, been so sadly changed by intemperate drinking, as to take a kind of infernal pleasure in planting their husbands' pillows with thorns ! How many fathers and mothers, who, before they began to follow strong drink, were patterns of parental care and affection, have, by yielding to its enticements, ceased to love their own offspring ! How many once dutiful and affectionate sons and brothers have undergone a transformation

so complete, in dram-shops, that every spark of filial reverence and fraternal kindness is finally extinguished! How many, whose friendship and society were formerly coveted, on account of the sweetness and frankness of their disposition, are now shunned, and with good reason, as the offscouring of all things! To sum up the whole in one short sentence, under the incubating influence of strong drink, the husband becomes a brute, the wife a serpent in the bosom, the parent a monster, the friend an enemy of all that is good, and the child a son of perdition.

4. Intemperate drinking greatly impairs, and wholly destroys the understanding. Dr. Waters, of the Pennsylvania hospital, some years ago, observed to Dr. Rush, that one third of the patients confined there on account of madness, had brought that terrible disease upon themselves by the use of ardent spirits. What a solemn lesson to all, who indulge themselves in hard drinking! Nor let it be supposed, that this lesson is taught only in the ravings of the miserable tenants of the Pennsylvania hospital. The fair inference from the above fact, is, that one third, or nearly that portion of all the maniacs in our country are self-made in the same way. Multitudes might be pointed out in every state, and not a few in some towns, who have literally made themselves mad by intemperance. Indeed, till people cease from drinking to excess, the same melancholy effects must be expected. Frequent intoxication cannot fail to impair the understanding. It must and will, gradually enfeeble and ultimately prostrate the noblest powers of the mind.

And how affecting is it to see brilliant talents clouded, and strong powers enervated, or in other words, to behold the noblest part of the noblest work of God on earth, shattered and lying in ruins, by the terrible agency of ardent spirits! How melancholy to witness the opening buds of genius blasted by the

fumes of intoxicating liquors ! But alas ! how frequent are such instances in this Christian land. I have known men, who had been numbered with the wise and respectable in society, gradually reduced to mere idiocy, by intemperance. I have seen the masculine and discriminating mind sinking by the same deadly influence into premature old age and second childhood. I have seen more than one promising youth, of high hopes and flattering prospects, snared and taken by that insidious enemy, whose ravages I am attempting to describe. I beheld, and the eye which lately beamed with intelligence grew dim. The mind, naturally vigorous and ardent, lost its tone. The memory became weak and treacherous. The healthy shoots of genius, instead of putting forth leaves and bearing fruit, became sickly, and dwindled almost to nothing. Every faculty was benumbed, or enervated by excess, and the young man sunk away into insignificance and contempt.

When I indulge the train of reflections which are suggested by such instances as these ; when I think how many thousands of superior minds have been destroyed by intemperance, I cannot but compare these ruins with those of some large and noble city. I walk over the ground where it stood, examine with painful retrospection the fallen columns and broken arches, survey the broad foundations of magnificent edifices now no more, and sigh to think, that the glory is departed forever.

5. Intemperate drinking prompts men to the perpetration of all the most shameful and abominable crimes. It instigates them to trample on every law, divine and human. Heated with strong drink, they care not whom they insult and abuse. It is then that they mock at the remonstrances of their best friends, and bid defiance to the civil arm. It is then that they fight in a manner which would disgrace dogs and bears. It is then, that breaking over all restraints, they make the air ring with the

most shocking profanation of God's holy name. It is in fits of intoxication that men often commit crimes at which they shudder when they come to themselves; such as blasphemy, robbery, rape, manslaughter, and murder. Judge Rush, in one of his excellent charges to the grand jury of Pennsylvania, solemnly declares, that he does not remember a single indictment, before him, for manslaughter, and very few for murder, which were not occasioned by intoxication.

6. The course pursued by hard drinkers is the high road to ruin. The stream on which they embark empties into the bottomless pit. They are in imminent danger of eternal destruction. Though here and there a drunkard has been reclaimed; though now and then a brand may be plucked from the burning; it is agreed on all hands, that the case of the intemperate is almost hopeless. Their consciences are scared, their hearts are hardened to a degree, which sets all intreaties and remonstrances at defiance. They have yielded to the power of an enemy, that knows no pity, and is daily making their bands strong; an enemy, that will not be satisfied with any thing short of their endless perdition.

It surely is not too much to say, that in the case of those who murder body and soul by intemperance, strong drink will add fuel to that fire which shall never be quenched; will impart a terrible activity to the deathless worm, and deepen the horrors of the blackness of darkness forever. *Drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*

All the sickness, and waste, and poverty, and woe, that ardent spirits produce, may be traced to one general cause; viz. the deep and desperate depravity of the human heart. If the heart were right, every thing else would be right. Not a fever would be kindled by strong drink. Not a pang would be excited, not a mind would be clouded, enervated, or distracted by its abuse. Not a husband, wife, son,

brother, or friend, would yield to its power. Not a trophy would it obtain on earth. Not a soul would it plunge into hell.

It is because men are dreadfully depraved, that they will drink to excess. It is owing to the powerful ascendancy, usurped by their appetites, that so many voluntarily resign themselves up to the cruel dominion of ardent spirits, in spite of all the warnings and instructions of Scripture, the stings of conscience, the strugglings of natural affection, the tears, and agonies, and remonstrances of friends, the loss of health, the swift approaches of poverty, the presages of death, and the terror of future retribution. But to be more particular :

1. Many parents by their example, and many more by their neglect, contribute largely to extend and perpetuate the evils of intemperance. Those of the first class drink to excess themselves. They must have their morning bitters, and their eleven o'clock dram, and their afternoon sling, and as much more liquor, as will make them merry, or cross, or foolish, or drunk. The children look on. At first they sip and loathe the poison presented to their lips by a parent's hand. But as the glass moves daily and briskly round the family circle, they gradually learn to follow the example that is set them. How many thousand parents, thus initiate their own offspring into all the abominations of drinking. And how many children are in this way ruined for time and eternity! "I have once," says Dr. Rush, "known drunkenness descend from a father to four, out of five, of his children." Now who can conceive a more horrible picture, than a school of intemperance kept by a parent in his own house? Who would not shudder to see a father leading his children into a den of serpents, or into a hospital green with the plague; or inviting them to follow him over a precipice; or offering them ratsbane; or persuading them to drink melted ore, at the mouth of a

furnace? Such cold blooded barbarity would be regarded with universal abhorrence, and consign the name of its author to everlasting infamy. What then shall we say of a parent, who lends the whole force of his example to make his children sots, beggars, and maniacs; a loathsome burden upon society here, and *vessels of wrath fitted for destruction* hereafter.

But this, though the worst, is not the only way in which parents may incur the guilt of extending the mischiefs of intemperance. They may do it indirectly, that is, by their *neglect* of family religion and family government. I cannot possibly doubt, that if due pains were taken to impress on the minds of children, at a very early period, an abhorrence of drunkards and of hard drinking, in all its forms, many might in this way be saved from shame and perdition. If parents would universally and diligently instruct their children, in respect to the great principles and duties of religion; if they would urge upon them the immense importance of governing all their passions and appetites; if they would daily pray with, and for them; in one word, if they would do every thing in their power to bring them up in the *nurture and admonition of the Lord*, multitudes, who, for want of such discipline and instruction, are overcome and ruined by temptation, would make very useful and respectable members of society.

But alas! how many children *make themselves vile, and their parents restrain them not*. How many fathers and mothers, in this Christian land, leave their sons and daughters to grow up almost as ignorant of God and duty, as if they were total strangers to the Bible. How many young men, while under the parental roof, and during that critical period when the vigilance of parents should be doubled, are permitted to associate with the dissolute and unprincipled; to loiter about taverns and dram shops, and to contract habits of idleness and tippling, which

are the sure presages of approaching ruin. These things are a *lamentation*, and shall be for a *lamentation*,

2. People often learn to drink, first moderately, and then to excess, by using spirits as a medicine. "Persons out of health," says Dr. Rush, "especially those who are afflicted with diseases of the stomach and bowels, are very apt to seek relief from ardent spirits. Let such people be cautious, how they make use of this dangerous remedy. I have known many men and women of excellent characters and principles, who have been betrayed by occasional doses of gin and brandy, into a love of those liquors, and have afterwards fallen sacrifices to their fatal effects."

3. Domestic trials, hypochondrical affections, disappointment of wishes, frustrations of plans, loss of property, and the like, produce despondency in the minds of many. And, instead of seeking for relief in the consolations of religion, where alone permanent relief can be found, not a few of them madly attempt to drown their sorrows in the wide and troubled sea of intoxication. But how many thousand times worse is the remedy than the disease! It is as if a man should set fire to his own house, in order to divert his mind from the loss of six-pence; or pluck out both his eyes, to rid himself of the momentary sight of some painful object; or lie down in a bed of glowing embers, to allay the heat of a fever. O let those who are in trouble, beware of the yawning and bottomless pit of intemperance. Let them watch and pray, that they enter not into temptation.

4. To the unfaithfulness, timidity, or temporizing policy of informing officers and magistrates, may be traced many of the evils, which we deplore. Had the laws been faithfully executed when hard drinking began its desolating career, had drunkards and tavern haunters, every where, been presented and punished, the evil would never have grown to its present magnitude; the flood would never have

risen so as to overflow all the mounds of decency and order. Thousands, who have died martyrs to intoxicating liquors, would have been saved to themselves, their friends, and their country. It is by parleying and temporizing, that we are brought to the brink of ruin. It is because so many of our sentinels have slept at their posts, or abandoned them in the hour of danger, that the enemy has nearly mastered the camp, and is carrying on the work of death in every part of it. The truth is, that one advantage after another has been gained, and concession has followed concession, till very little, if any thing more remains for hard drinkers to demand. They stagger unmolested, in the face of day, before the houses of our magistrates. They lie at the corners of our streets, the shame of our race, and a wonder to the very beasts. The informing officer sees it, or is afraid he shall see it, and passes by on the other side. Thus for want of vigilance and energy in the constituted authorities, do the intemperate go on with impunity, from year to year, ruining themselves, and corrupting thousands of others, by their influence and example.

5. Idleness is another legitimate parent of intemperance. An old divine has very forcibly remarked, that an "idle man's mind is the devil's workshop." It is not pretended, that every idle man becomes a hard drinker; but every such person exposes himself peculiarly to temptation, and hard drinking is certainly one of the vices, into which the idle are extremely apt, sooner or later, to fall.

6. The countenance, which has been incautiously and extensively given, in worthy and serious families, to the free use of ardent spirits, has contributed not a little to swell the tide that roars around us, and fills every thoughtful mind with the most painful apprehensions. It has been thought an essential part of common civility in many such families, to treat company with some kind of spirits. This has

given birth to a vast deal of ingenuity in coloring, diluting, mixing, and sweetening liquors, so as to render them in the highest degree beautiful and palatable. With the kindest intentions in the world, the decanter of brandy is brought out, or the sparkling cordial is handed round the friendly circle.

In order to show that their hospitality is real and hearty, the master and mistress of the house must drink the health of their guests, and each guest, to show that he is not deficient in politeness, must return the compliment.

If it is perceived, that any drink sparingly the first time round; they are most commonly urged to repeat the draught. Thus the reluctant are not unfrequently persuaded to drink, when they would gladly decline. If children happen to be present, no matter how young, they too must receive their part of the disguised poison. I do not mean to say that this is excessive drinking; but in almost every case, it is unnecessary, and often leads to the most unhappy consequences.

By such a use of ardent spirits as has been mentioned, in tea parties, and other social circles; many persons have gradually been seduced from the path of temperance, and have finally been undone. Nor has the mischief stopped here. The example thus set in high circles, has had a baleful effect upon multitudes, in the humble walks of life. If the rich drink, in their social intercourse, the poor must drink also; and thus the evils of drinking are indefinitely extended and multiplied.

7. Many of our taverns, and all of our dram-shops, are at once causes and effects of much intemperance. Their very existence proves, that the thirst for ardent spirits is already insatiable; and while they indicate, they greatly increase the mischief.

As for those unlicensed grog-shops, that are every where to be met with, no language will express the abhorrence, which they ought to excite. The way

to them is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death. They are the work-shops of that great enemy who *ruleth in the hearts of the children of disobedience*. If every tippling house were a Bastille, it would not be a place of so much danger, nor the cause of so much suffering. Whenever I pass by one of them, I can scarcely help fancying, that I hear the cries of a multitude of half naked and half starved children issuing from its gloomy interior; and that I see it filled with the most loathsome and painful diseases; with mortgages, and constables, and auctioneers, and beggars, and idiots, and maniacs, and murderers, and prison grates, and straight jackets, and gallowses, and coffins! At least three-fourths of the places in this country, where liquors are sold by the gill or half gill, are fountains of corruption, whence flow in every direction streams not to fertilize and cheer, but to curse the land with barrenness and death.

8. Many of the evils of intemperance may be distinctly traced to the great and increasing number of distilleries, in every part of the Union.

Where almost can one of these establishments be pointed out, which has not formed around itself a kind of intoxicating atmosphere, within the deadly influence of which drunkenness prevails and increases, in the most alarming manner? Who can deny, that the fiery streams which issue from a still, like melted lava from the flaming crater of a volcano, too often spread ruin and desolation where they flow.

No person ever became a drunkard, or a tippler, all at once. The descent to infamy and ruin upon the fiery stream of intoxicating liquors, though often rapid, is not perpendicular. In almost every case, the progress, at first, is slow and imperceptible.—Probably not one hard drinker in a hundred entertained the least apprehension of danger, when he began to fall; and not one in fifty can, upon looking back, specify the day, or the month when he took

the first step, in the downward road of intemperance. It requires time to pervert the natural taste ; to silence the remonstrances of conscience, to overcome the sense of shame ; to extinguish the best affections of the heart ; and, with the eyes open, to plunge voluntarily into all the miseries of infamy, poverty, disease, death, and perdition.

It is by degrees, that an inordinate thirst for ardent spirits is created. The poison diffuses itself through the system unseen and unsuspected. While the unconscious victim cries peace and safety, sudden destruction is coming upon him. Every day adds a new and stronger link to the chain, that is soon to bind him beyond the hope of deliverance. At every step his path becomes more steep, and critical. Like a benighted wanderer on the glaciers of Switzerland, he walks upon the brink of destruction, and knows it not. Or rather he is like a man in a delirium, who should stand and laugh and sing on some loose impending crag of the highest Alps, at the very moment when he is about plunging into the abyss beneath.

This might serve for a hasty outline ; but it may be useful to pursue the subject further. Let us then endeavour, in a few cases, to trace the insidious progress of intemperance, step by step, from the first excess, to habitual intoxication.

We will begin with one of these invalids, who are gradually and insensibly seduced by strong drink, under the imposing name of medicine. He resorts to the bottle of bitters at first, not because he craves liquor, but to remove some ache, or to gain a temporary relief from debility. He drinks very sparing once a day, and is sure that it does him good. Soon he finds, that the little, which he has been accustomed to take, does not produce the desired effect, and therefore increases the dose. While under its stimulating operation he feels better ; but when that ceases, he sinks lower than ever. Long before the stated hour returns, he is driven, by a kind of unaccountable impulse, to

the bottle, by the use of which he once more gains a momentary relief.

In the mean time he feels, or thinks he feels a variety of strange spasms and shooting pains, which nothing but his beloved medicine can remove. Under this impression, he after a while uses it so frequently and so freely, that its inebriating effects become apparent to his friends. They are alarmed, and very tenderly suggest to him the expediency of substituting some other medicine. He is confident that nothing will answer the purpose so well, and thinks himself fully authorized to reject their friendly advice. The habit of drinking now increases upon him every day. He is often disguised, and his friends think it high time to remonstrate with him in a more decided tone. He pretends to be astonished that they should entertain such suspicions; assures them that these suspicions are wholly groundless; that he drinks no more than his health absolutely requires, and wonders how they can be so cruel, as to think of depriving a poor sick man of the only medicine which gives him any relief. Thus he contrives to blind his own eyes, and to resist every motive that can be urged to save him from ruin. While he flatters himself that his health is improving, his bands are made strong. He wastes all the little strength that he had, and goes prematurely down to the grave a confirmed drunkard. Or, if he recovers in spite of strong drink, it is only to drag out a few months or years of shame and guilt; to be a burden to his friends, and a curse to the community. Such, in a thousand cases, is the gradual and insidious progress of intemperance, begun and carried on by using ardent spirits as a medicine.

Let us now trace its footsteps and its ravages along the path of honour and office. Here, alas! we shall find many a column broken and defaced, which once stood strong and towered high, the pride and ornament of the State. Here, also, may we behold the useless fragments of a multitude of inferior pillars,

which while they stood, helped to support the public edifice. None of these, let it be remembered, were overthrown by a single shock. Their foundations were gradually and silently washed away, till they tottered, and at last fell to rise no more. How this catastrophe is produced, it is not difficult to explain. In doing public business men have the temptation to drink almost always before them. Our habits are such, that to avoid being singular, those who would gladly decline, think they must, at least, take a little. Here the rivulet, in many cases, takes its rise. Drinking a little once, prepares the way for drinking more. Liquor is always plenty, and often free. This last circumstance induces some to drink more than they would feel themselves able to buy. Being once fairly initiated, they find it difficult to refrain. Having had the decanter of brandy always at hand, when abroad, discharging their public duties, it is natural to wish for it at home. And when matters have proceeded thus far, the danger of confirmed intemperance becomes great, and the most distressing apprehensions of friends, are too often speedily realized.

Thus, one indulgence, which perhaps, was merely complimentary, prompts to a second ; that to a third, and so on, till the melancholy fate of the victim is sealed. In the mean time, public confidence is greatly withdrawn. The whisper of suspicion gives place to the irresistible proofs of ocular demonstration. "He is not the man he once was," is repeated by one and another, with a significant look and strong emphasis. To his utter astonishment he finds his character gone, before he suspected that it was even tarnished. This discovery accelerates his fall. He throws off those restraints which a regard to his character had imposed, becomes a confirmed sot, is an object of pity and derision while he lives, and goes unlamented down to the grave.

Still further to illustrate the gradual and fatal progress of intemperance, let us seek in the bosom

of some happy and respectable family, for an amiable and promising youth, on whom the fondest hopes of his parents rest. We will suppose (what alas! too often happens,) that through their indiscreet use of strong drink in the family, he contracted, even in childhood, too high a relish for the cordial. Or we will suppose, that his feet first began imperceptibly to slide, at a ball, a military parade, or, on a fourth of July. Having once begun to drink spirits, he repeats and increases the draught from time to time, without the least suspicion of danger, and is pleased with the exhilarating effects. This exhilaration is naturally followed by languor, and he soon learns, when his spirits are depressed, to raise them by the stimulus of ardent spirits.

Yielding to the importunity of merry and insinuating companions, he goes now and then to the tavern, or grog-shop. The glass is filled, passes briskly around, and he is urged to partake of its contents. If he declines, or drinks sparingly, he is ridiculed as a lad of no spirit. Again the glass is replenished; again and again he is over-persuaded to put it to his mouth. Nor after others have treated him so generously, is it possible for him to get off with honour, till he has called in his glass, and pledged the noisy circle. He goes away heartily ashamed of himself, and resolves never to be found in such company again. But he is again solicited, and yields. He is observed to drink more willingly and freely than before, and is greeted with applause. This flatters his vanity, but cannot altogether quiet his conscience. He returns home late. The suspicions of his parents are excited. They inquire where he has been; and, after some attempts at equivocation, he is constrained to tell. They tenderly admonish him, and he promises never to offend in this way again. A new temptation, however, presents itself, and he is overcome. All this time he abhors the character of a drunkard; never suspecting that he is becoming

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one himself. But the dreadful truth begins to appear. His eyes and his face betray him. He grows idle and quarrelsome; answers his parents roughly; and learns to swear and gamble over the bottle as often as he can find opportunity.

He is, perhaps, secretly carried home intoxicated, from his midnight revels, once or twice. The scene is too much for his doating father and mother. Their hearts are ready to burst with anguish. Half despairing and half distracted, they weep and pray till he comes to himself, and then, in the most earnest and moving terms, set before him the fatal consequences of persevering in his present course. His brothers and sisters intreat him, with many tears, not to destroy himself, and not to rend the heart-strings of those who most tenderly love him. He is deeply affected, promises amendment, and forms strong resolutions, which alas! prove like the morning cloud and the early dew.

At length his intemperance becomes a subject of public conversation. Many have seen him in a state of partial or complete intoxication. Then it is, that to save his character, if possible, a little longer, his friends invent for him a variety of excuses; such as that he drank upon an empty stomach; he was very much out of health; he was overcome with cold; or he is subject to fits and fainting. Vain efforts to conceal the truth! He has fits, indeed, but they are fits of drunkenness, which become every month more frequent and more public. He is seen staggering away from the dram-shop, or lying senseless on the ground, at noon-day. If he is able to get home, he raves like a maniac, or rather like a fiend; curses father and mother, and imprecates the vengeance of God upon his own head.

Thus he goes on, waxing worse and worse; selling the very clothes from his back to buy spirits; destroying all the faculties of his mind; and *treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath*. He dies

as he lived. The grief of his mother is too big for utterance. Gladly would she pour it forth in tears, but cannot. Even tears refuse to come to her relief. His father, trembling with agony, and bending over his grave, breaks out in the heart rending apostrophe of king David, *O my son, my son, would to God I had died for thee, my son, my son.*

Painful as is this view of the gradual and terrible progress of intemperance, there is at least one other, which is not less distressing. I have seen the affectionate husband, the fond parent, the warm friend, and the kind neighbour, drawn incautiously within the tremendous sweep of this worse than Norwegian whirlpool. For some time he was carried so slowly round its vast circumference, that his friends could scarcely perceive the motion, and he was wholly unconscious of it himself. But at length suspicion ripened into certainty. It became apparent, that every revolution hastened his progress, and carried him nearer to the fatal centre. His fond wife, terrified almost to distraction, intreated him instantly to make his escape. He smiled at her weakness, and assured her there was no danger. This increased her alarm; and fain would she have rescued him at the hazard of her own life, but could not. His children stretched out their imploring hands, and his friends made every possible effort to save him, but in vain. At times indeed, he would seem to listen to their intreaties, and feebly to struggle against the current that was hurrying him to destruction. But at length its whirling velocity made him giddy, and even deprived him of reason. Every moment accelerated his approach to the roaring gulf; and while I beheld, he suddenly disappeared, and I saw him no more!

Let my readers tell, whether they have not seen a man, happy in the bosom of his family, kindly discharging the duties of a husband and father, till that great destroyer, strong drink, entered his house, and

tempted him to his undoing. His destruction, however, was not accomplished in a day or a month. If he indulged his appetite for liquor too far, he firmly resolved never to become a slave to it. If he drank his morning bitters regularly every day, he was sure that the habit could not be attended with any danger. If he went occasionally to the tavern, it was only to read the newspapers ; or if to the dram-shop, he had business there which could not be dispensed with. He always retired early and sober.

But notwithstanding all his excuses and palliations it was apparent, that he had begun to fall. Instead of passing his evenings at home, as formerly, he might be seen hanging about the tavern till a late hour. Private and tender remonstrances were resorted to, and he promised reformation. He left his dissolute companions, and resolved never to renew the connexion. But neither promises nor resolutions could bind him. He returned to his cups. He neglected his business. His customers called, and not finding him at home, withdrew their patronage. His wife tried every endearing method to withdraw his feet from the path of ruin. He was not yet a drunkard ; but it was evident he would be soon, unless something could be done to check his progress, and no effectual means could be devised. At length he came home intoxicated. The distress of his partner and the consternation of his children may be imagined, but cannot be painted.

When sleep had brought him to himself, most earnestly did she conjure him for his own sake, for her's, and for that of their common offspring, to reform without delay. He seemed to relent ; begged that she would forgive him ; bound himself by the most solemn promises, and once more revived her hopes ! Delusive hopes ! Unable to walk, he was soon after carried home by his companions ; slept away the fumes of the inebriating draught ; again relented, and again relapsed. Now it was, that he

gave himself up to sin with greediness. Now it was, that he might be seen staggering away from the dram-shop, at an early hour of the day. Whenever he went from home, his poor broken hearted wife trembled to think of his return. His estate was soon all measured out by the gill and the half gill; his family was reduced to beggary; and the boys in the streets hooted at him as he reeled along.

And now, yonder comes that loathsome, self-degraded monster. Behold his bloated face, his eyes swollen and red, and every feature distorted. See him at length feeling for the door of his own house, stumbling over the threshold and entering more like a brute than like a man.

If your heart can endure it, follow him into the house. Behold his children fleeing and shuddering, as if pursued by a wild beast. Conceive, if you can, what his poor heart-broken wife must suffer, as she sinks down in her chair, and remains speechless. And is this the man who vowed to love and cherish her in sickness and in health? Is this the husband who was once so kind, the father whose children used to run out to meet him, and welcome his return! O how changed! And by what means? What evil spirit is this that now possesses, and is dragging him away to the pit? It is intemperance. Reader! once he was as free from its influence as thou art. But he was snared and taken when he little thought of it; and so mayest thou be. He has fallen by little and little. Soon he will die, and while we lament his dreadful exit, let us remember that he does not perish alone. Thousands of husbands and fathers in the United States are now travelling the same road; and except they repent and reform, of which there is almost no hope, will ere long meet the same doom!

Finally; I have seen the gradual progress of intemperance in the wife and the mother. She was a woman of engaging manners and a sweet disposi-

tion, beautiful, prudent, sensible and serious. The heart of her husband safely trusted in her. He fondly promised himself that she would *do him good and not evil all the days of her life*. She stretched out her hand to the poor ; yea, she reached forth her hands to the needy. She opened her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue was the law of kindness. Her children arose up and called her blessed ; her husband also, and he praised her. Happy, happy days, and golden prospects !

But, in an unguarded hour, strong drink seduced her. By slow degrees, at first, she became attached to the insidious poison. A change in her general deportment was observable, but the cause was not known. Her husband was first compelled to suspect (what he would have given all his substance to disprove) that she was becoming intemperate. But how should he mention to her, what he could not think of without torture ? Her children were convinced, that something was wrong, and her friends began to feel anxious.

Had she stopped here every suspicion would have vanished, and she would if possible, have been loved more than ever. But she never once thought that her feet stood on slippery places, and the arch deceiver did not choose to resign the influence, which had been so slowly gained. She yielded to every new temptation, till the habit of drinking was in a great measure confirmed. Her husband suggested to her his fears, in the most tender and delicate terms, and she seemed to be affected. Neither resolutions, nor promises were wanting ; but they were not long regarded. Though her husband did every thing in his power to conceal her guilt and shame, it was impossible. All who loved and esteemed her were grieved and astonished. Her disposition was soon ruined, and her intellect impaired. Intoxication followed excess, and while under the influence of liquor, to torment her husband was her greatest delight. He could have faced the enemies of his

country with calmness, in the field of death. He could have firmly extended his right arm to the knife of the surgeon ; but he could not support the thought that his beloved wife was become a drunkard.

In the mean time, however, the habit, to which she had yielded gained strength. Her house and her little ones were neglected. Every thing that she could get was expended for liquor. The whole order of the family was subverted. Her health was undermined. It seemed as if she must speedily close her melancholy career. But she lived long enough to break her husband's heart, and prevent the proper education of her children. At last she died, and where is she ?

Let those who have eyes to read, and hearts to feel, seriously reflect upon the views which I have attempted faintly to sketch, of the gradual and fatal progress of intemperance, when once it gains the ascendancy ; and let them watch and pray against it without ceasing.

Having taken a view of the causes, the insidious progress, and the terrible effects of intemperance, it is time to inquire, whether any thing can be done to *stay the plague*, and, if any thing, what ? This is an inquiry of vital importance. If every section and corner of our country were ravaged by a pestilential disease, it would avail but little for the physicians to investigate the causes of it ;—to trace its progress and count its victims ; unless they could discover and apply suitable remedies.

So in the case before us, it is by no means sufficient to point out the causes, progress, and effects of intemperance. To dismiss the subject here, would be to leave the benevolent mind in a state of the most painful suspense. If the distemper has not progressed so far, as to cut off all hope ; if any thing can be done by way of cure or prevention ; it is exceedingly desirable that the proper remedies

should be pointed out and applied without delay. The idea that "our wound is incurable," must not be indulged one moment. Much may be done to limit, if we cannot wholly prevent the ravages of strong drink; to lessen the streams, if we cannot dry up the fountain. I shall therefore proceed to suggest the most obvious and practicable remedies.

1. The first remedy that I would propose, and earnestly recommend, especially to those who have begun to follow strong drink, is a total abstinence from the use of all intoxicating liquors. This may, probably be deemed a harsh remedy by some; but the nature of the disease absolutely requires it. Men who have been in the habit of using small quantities of spirits, may possibly wean themselves gradually, though this would not be the best course even for them. But for the drunkard, or the tippler, to think of reforming by degrees, is perfectly idle. Such persons are in this way a thousand times more likely to grow worse than better, in spite of the most solemn resolution they can form. And even if one of a thousand should in this way begin to retrace his steps, and gradually approach the path of temperance, he would every day be exposed to a fatal relapse. To parley with so insidious an enemy as strong drink, is just about the same thing as to surrender at discretion. As well might the poor bird, when charmed by a serpent, think to break the enchantment, by gradually withdrawing from the wily destroyer. "My observations," says the excellent Dr. Rush, "authorise me to say, that persons who have been addicted to the use of spirit, should abstain from it *suddenly and entirely*. *Taste not, handle not, touch not*, should be inscribed upon every vessel that contains spirits, in the house of a man who wishes to be cured of habits of intemperance."

It is most earnestly to be wished, that these remarks of Dr. Rush may meet the eyes, and be engraven on the hearts of all that class of people in

our land, who occupy the middle space between strict temperance and habitual intoxication; men that must regularly have their morning bitters, their eleven o'clock dram, and their afternoon sling;—such as are apt, on public occasions, to become merry and talkative, or boisterous and quarrelsome;—all, in a word, who are gradually and insensibly swerving from the path of sobriety.

2. The evils of hard drinking, which every good man deplures, might be greatly diminished, by laying heavy duties on all foreign and domestic spirits. Some, I know, strenuously contend, that increasing the price has no tendency to diminish the consumption. Those, who love liquor, will have it, say they, let it cost what it may. It is true that sots and tipplers are not apt to mind the expense, so long as their money and credit last. But the higher the price is, the sooner must their means be exhausted, and the more difficult must they find it to procure the insidious poison.

It is certain that much more rum would be drunk, than now is, if it could be purchased for half a dollar a gallon; and much less would be drunk, if the price were advanced to four or five dollars. The same may be said of all kinds of ardent spirits, manufactured in this country. If heavy duties were laid on all our distilleries, they would manufacture less, and the people would drink less. If for instance the price of cider brandy was raised three or four fold, by a general excise, the farmer who now lays up his barrel, or hogshead for family use, would be satisfied with less than one-third the quantity. Many a bloated wretch, who now gets dead drunk with sixpence, would, for want of more money, be saved from this worse than brutal debasement. It is the language of common sense supported by the testimony of experience. *Diminish* the price, and you increase the consumption; *augment* the price, and you diminish the consumption. So high are the

duties in Great Britain, at this moment, upon spirits manufactured in her own colonies, that the use of rum is almost unknown among the lower and middling classes of the people. Similar duties would undoubtedly procure similar effects here.

It has been remarked, that a great proportion of the emigrants to this country from England and Ireland are intemperate, and it is generally supposed, that they were equally so before their emigration. But this last is a mistaken idea. Many of them first began to indulge in strong drink after they land upon our shores. Wages are so much higher, in this country, than in the countries from which they came, and ardent spirits are so much cheaper here, that they can afford to drink more freely, and thus are drawn into the vortex, before their apprehensions are excited. Let our general and state governments impose very heavy duties upon the importer, the distiller, and the retailer, and I am sure that the fiery deluge that is now rolling its waves every where would speedily and rapidly subside.

3. That conscientious regard to the public good, which the community has a right to expect and demand, in the appointment of informing officers and retailers of spirits, would greatly check the progress of intemperance. Men of the first respectability, and most advantageously situated, should be selected for grand jurors and other informing officers. Under the vigilant eye of such men, the noisy rabble of tipplers would shrink into darkness, and study concealment. A few presentments would go far towards clearing the most thronged gag-shops, and many young men who are beginning to fall, would be saved from utter ruin. As for abuses of licenses, now so common, they might, in my apprehension, be effectually prevented, if the authority would make it an invariable rule not to renew the licence of a man, who has once been convicted of abusing his privilege.

4. A kind of moral test act, declaring every drunkard unfit to hold any office, and disqualified to vote in any public meeting, would, it is presumed, give a salutary check to excessive drinking. The lovers of rum, and brandy, and whiskey, may very probably start at this suggestion, and deny the right of the government to enact such a law. But if intemperance strikes at the foundations of public, as well as domestic happiness; if an intoxicated man is alike unfit to legislate, to judge, to execute laws, and to have a voice, in making appointments to office, then it is proper, that the door should be shut against him, even when he is sober. For who can tell, whether he will be capable of acting at all when his services are most needed? and who would be willing to confide his dearest rights to the decision of a drunkard?

That men may rightfully be disfranchised, for making brutes of themselves and ruining their families, as well as for perjury, or any other crime, I take to be a sound proposition. And if the thing could be done in this country, it would save thousands from all the debasement, and woes, and crimes of intemperance.

5. Much might be done to discountenance hard drinking, by the electors, in every state and town, in the exercise of their elective franchise. All the good and virtuous might easily agree, never to vote for a man, (of whatsoever politics) who is known to make too free use of the bottle, or to buy votes with liquor. Let such agreements, in larger and smaller circles be made, published and adhered to, and it would have a prodigious influence in diminishing the consumption of ardent spirits.

6. Much might be done, by totally excluding the intemperate from all reputable company. The melancholy truth is, that though it is considered disgraceful upon the whole, for a person to be seen intoxicated, what is called a *high scrape*, if it occurs

On Intemperance.

for their workmen; if, instead of furnishing liquor, they would give an additional compensation to labourers, furnishing them at the same time with a generous supply of nutritious and palatable drink, such as cider, beer, molasses and water, milk and water, and the like, a very large advance would be made towards banishing the fiery product of our distilleries from the field and the shop. And this would be no inconsiderable part of that general reformation, as it respects the use of ardent spirits, which is so loudly called for.

10. After all, the most certain remedy for intemperate drinking, as well as for every other evil practice, is religion. It is this heaven-born principle, which conquers and controls our inordinate desires and appetites. It is this, which restores reason to the exercise of its legitimate authority over man. It is this, which not only teaches men, but disposes them to preserve their bodies as temples of the Holy Ghost. In proportion as they love and fear God, they will be temperate. To this grand object, therefore, ^{and} and prayers of all good people directed. And in connexion with these efforts and prayers, let every remedy that has been here suggested, and every other that can be devised, be faithfully applied.

Intemperance, though an enemy of terrible aspect; an enemy that has cast down many strong men, wounded and slain many mighty, has never yet, blessed be God, been permitted to gain an ascendancy so complete, that its desolating career could not be arrested. And our grateful acknowledgments are due to the Author of all good, that the number of the timid and despairing has been, for some time past, rapidly on the decline. Many good people, who once felt as if nothing effectual could be done, have found to their surprise, upon facing the enemy, that it is not a regular force which they have met, but a reeling, disorderly rabble! and that,

if the army of intemperance is numerically great, it is by no means so formidable, as they had supposed. A little thought has, moreover, convinced them, that even if this army cannot now be met and vanquished in the field, it must soon waste away, and be entirely disbanded, unless kept alive by a succession of new recruits.

Still however the voice of despondency is heard from various quarters, expressing itself in such terms as the following. 'Would to God, that the alarm had been sounded sooner. Time was, when something effectual might have been done; but that time is past. Our wound, alas! is incurable. *The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.* The fire burns so fiercely, that it cannot be quenched. The poison is so diffused, that no remedy can avail.'

But through what powerful magnifying glass do they look? What new race of giants have they discovered? Can nothing be done to save our children from bondage, shame, and premature death? Why not? Cast away this mischievous magnifier. Look with your eyes. Be calm and collected. Fears and phantoms are bad counsellors. Dismiss them. You are not left alone. There are more than seven thousand, or ten times seven thousand, who have not bowed the knee to Baal, and who may be counted upon, in this holy war, against intemperance.

And can nothing be done by such a host? Nothing to maintain the ground which is not yet lost—nothing to force the enemy from the open field—nothing to reduce his strong holds, to drive in his out posts, or to cut off his supplies? Can all the pious and sober people in the land do nothing to check the progress of this evil? Nothing by their example? nothing by their influence with friends and dependants? nothing in their own families? Or is it to be believed, that the great body of the wise and good, will, in this case, refuse to *come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty*? Let them be distinctly

called upon ; let them be convinced of the danger, and they will come forward and enroll themselves.

Further ; let such as are tempted to resign themselves to despondency, be told for their encouragement, that much has actually been done, within two years past, to *stay the plague*—much more than even the most sanguine had ventured to anticipate. The writer can assure them from his own observation, and from statements on which implicit reliance can be placed, that in New-England a glorious reformation is begun, under circumstances affording good reason to hope that it will proceed.

The pleasing result of a report lately made by intelligent gentlemen from all parts of a large district, was, that several drunkards have been hopefully reformed within the past year ; that preaching against the use of strong drink, though very pointed, has been highly popular ; that frequenting dram-shops and taverns is growing more and more disreputable ! that, in some towns, the consumption of spirits has been diminished by more than one half the usual quantity, and that every where the diminution is very apparent.

These and similar tokens for good afford abundant reason *to thank God and take courage*. Let the hands that still hang down, be lifted up. Let the feeble knees be strengthened. Let God be praised for the good that has already been done. Let his continued smiles be earnestly implored. Let every advantage be vigorously followed up, and, by God's help, our victory will be certain and complete.

THE
ORPHAN
SISTERS.

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THE
ORPHAN SISTERS.

WILLIAM FORD was the son of a mechanic, who by his industry, sobriety, and skill in business, although he began the world without a single guinea, in a life of sixty years saved money enough to put him apprentice to a hosier, besides leaving him, at his death, sufficient to set up for himself. Although his capital was not large, had he possessed his father's activity and abilities, he might in a few years greatly have increased it; but this was not the case. He was sober, good tempered, and not addicted to any particular vice; but so indolent, as greatly to prefer lounging beside his parlour fire, and playing with his children, to attending to his business, the management of which he left almost entirely to his shopman, in whom he placed implicit confidence.

Mrs. Ford was a violent, tyrannical, vain woman: her affection was very unequally divided between her daughters, and this merely because Rachel, the oldest, although not remarkably plain, had no pretensions to that beauty which Hannah possessed in an uncommon degree. The fondness of this injudicious parent was a real misfortune to her favourite, as it procured for her the indulgence of all her whims and improper wishes.

Although **Mr. Ford** saw the impropriety of his wife's conduct, and feared that her too great kindness to the one, and harshness towards the other, would ruin the dispositions of both, yet he stood so much in awe of her violent temper, that he dared not interpose. All he ventured to do was, to treat Rachel kindly himself; nor could this wholly escape **Mrs.**

Ford's censures, and she often accused him of spoiling her.

When the girls attained the age which rendered it necessary that they should begin their education, they were sent to a respectable day school in the town where they resided: but the most trifling excuse from Hannah could at any time prevail upon her mother to permit her to remain at home, for so firmly was this weak woman persuaded that her darling's beauty would make her fortune, that she thought it signified little whether she learned any thing or not. Hannah therefore, who had little desire for improvement, seldom went to school, and when she did, paid so little attention to the instructions she received, that she might nearly as well have kept away. Rachel, on the contrary, glad to escape from her mother's unkindness, rejoiced at the return of those hours which summoned her to school, where her attentive, orderly behaviour soon made her a favourite with her governess, whilst her companions all loved her for her cheerful and obliging temper. At fifteen, she was, to her great regret, removed from school; and her sister, although two years younger, begged to be released, as she called it; and her mother, who could not deny any request of hers, however improper it might be, consented.

Rachel had made excellent use of the years of instruction. She read, wrote, spelt, and ciphered extremely well; was perfectly acquainted with grammar, and an excellent needle-woman. Hannah, being fond of dressing herself out, had learned to work tolerably well; but knew very little of grammar or figures, and could scarcely read or write intelligibly. Mr. Ford was struck with the different progress made by his daughters during their continuance at school; but although he admired Rachel's abilities, loved her for her amiable disposition, and wondered how his wife could be insensible to both; yet the same

blameable indolence of temper, which had hitherto prevented him from exerting himself on her behalf, still kept him a silent spectator of the injustice she daily suffered.

Rachel endeavoured by every possible means to soften her mother and gain her affection. She bore all her ill humours with the most patient sweetness, and omitted no opportunity of obliging and being useful to her. Mrs. Ford was so possessed with the silly idea that Hannah's beauty would induce some gentleman of fortune to make her his wife, that all the money she could get from her husband was laid out in fine clothes and ornaments to set it off to advantage; and that her daughter, thus adorned, might be seen and admired, it appeared to her highly proper that she should frequent all the tea parties, and places of public resort, to which a young woman in her rank of life could gain admission. Thus Hannah soon became so vain, so fond of dress and amusement, that she was never happy at home; whilst Rachel, who had neither finery nor beauty to display, felt no wish beyond performing her duty towards her Maker, and rendering herself as useful and agreeable as she could to her parents.

In this manner had four years passed since their leaving school, when their father died, and his widow taking the above-mentioned shopman into partnership, gave herself no further trouble about her affairs, but continued to lead the same idle life as before. In a little more than two years she also died, quite ignorant that through her own negligence, and her partner's villany, she was so deeply in debt, that had she lived a few months longer, she would have beheld herself and children stripped of every thing. Her partner, immediately on her decease, went off with all the money he could gain possession of, leaving the stock and furniture to the mercy of the creditors, who soon took possession of the whole.

Nothing could be more destitute than the condition of the poor orphans. They had no relation who could afford to assist them, and their parents having associated with persons of characters similar to their own, had acquired neither friends nor protectors; for such can only be hoped for among the wise and virtuous. They were too young and ignorant to act for themselves, and must have been exposed to much danger and distress, had not Providence raised them up a friend in the person of a Mrs. Moor, a single lady, of considerable fortune, who having been in a bad state of health, and desirous of residing during the winter months near her physician, had taken the first floor of Mr. Ford's house, where she had lived a part of the last three years. She had been pleased with the beauty and sprightliness of Hannah, but still more so with the modesty, industry and respectful manner of Rachel. No sooner did this lady, who was remarkable for her active benevolence, hear of the forlorn situation in which they were left, than she resolved to take them under her protection, and to support and instruct them, until they should be able, with her assistance and recommendation, to provide for themselves.

As soon as their mother's funeral was over, the expenses of which their kind friend discharged, they removed to her house, about twenty miles distant from London, and were placed under the immediate direction of her housekeeper, Mrs. Green, a sensible worthy woman, who was perfectly qualified, and equally desirous to instruct them. In this situation they continued three years, which were to Rachel most happy ones. Every day she learned something useful, and became more valuable and agreeable to Mrs. Moor, who, at the end of that time, took her for her own personal attendant, the young woman who had served her in that capacity being obliged to leave her in order to nurse an aged father. Rachel, who used to dread the idea of quitting the

protection of her excellent friend; and entering upon a world so full of disappointment, folly and danger, was delighted with the prospect of spending, she hoped, many years in contributing to the ease and comfort of one whom she loved so much, and to whom she was so greatly obliged.

Hannah, on the contrary, thought every hour lost whilst she was imprisoned, as she called it, in a family which appeared to her so insupportably dull. She longed for the time when she should make her entrance upon a new scene, being fully persuaded that any change must be for the better; and rejoiced that Mrs. Moor had not chosen her for her attendant, being certain that she could never have endured the restraints which such a situation would have laid upon her. Of this, indeed, there was little danger, for notwithstanding all the kind attention which had been paid to her improvement in those qualifications which the station in life she has designed for demanded, she continued nearly as ignorant as when she entered Mrs. Moor's house. She paid little attention to the advice and instructions she received; her thoughts continually running upon dress, beauty, and the gay world, which she pictured to herself as full of pleasure and delight. She neglected the tasks assigned, and forgot the directions given her; called Mrs. Moor's kind reproofs ill nature, and her condescending advice tiresome lectures; constantly complaining that her sister was the favourite both of that lady and Mrs. Green; not reflecting that their preference of Rachel was the natural consequence of her good conduct, and her own levity, and want of gratitude and goodness of heart.

Things were in this state when Sir William Ormond, a distant relation of Mrs. Moor, who had been some years abroad, arrived with his lady and family at the manor-house, a noble seat which he possessed at the distance of half a mile from her

habitation. He had a large train of servants, a splendid equipage, and every thing which would dazzle, and excite the envy of the weak and unprincipled. Although Mrs. Moor liked neither her relation's character, nor his way of living, she did not choose to decline all intercourse with him and his family, particularly as he had daughters, to whom, as she hoped they were yet uncorrupted by the follies and vanities of the world, she thought she might possibly be of some use.

The relationship between the heads of the families, occasioned an acquaintance between the housekeepers; and Mrs. Barker, lady Ormond's principal servant, requested Mrs. Green to bring Rachel and Hannah to drink tea with her, in order to see the house. Rachel said, if Mrs. Moor had no objection to it, she should be very glad to go; and Hannah was half wild with eagerness, and begged that it might be the very next day.—Mrs. Moor's consent was accordingly obtained, and the visit made.

At their return Rachel said, it was certainly a very fine, beautiful place to see for once, but that she would much rather live in Mrs. Moor's pretty neat house, than in one so very large, and which contained so many things with the use of which she was unacquainted, and appeared to her to be furnished rather for show than either for use or comfort. She added, that she greatly disliked the manners and appearance of the servants; she said the men swore very much, that they all appeared extremely bold, and spoke of their master and mistress, neither with respect nor affection. Far different were the feelings of Hannah: she declared, that the manor-house was a perfect heaven upon earth, and that there was nothing which she so ardently desired, as to live in such a charming, delightful family.

On the following sunday, she spent the whole time before the hour of going to church, in dressing her-

self to the best advantage. There she was met by Mrs. Barker, and lady Ormond's woman, who without taking any notice of Rachel, asked her to go back with them to dinner; which invitation she, without waiting to consult either her sister or Mrs. Green, instantly accepted.

At the manor-house she was entertained with stories of the gay world, to which she listened with eagerness; and the butler said with a familiar smile, that it was a shame and pity, such a fine girl should be shut up in a country village, with a cross old woman, instead of living in some family like his master's, where she might see the world. Hannah answered, that nothing would make her so happy as such an exchange, for that indeed she was moped to death at Mrs. Moors; adding, that nature never intended her for the notable housewife, which that lady and her housekeeper were endeavouring to make of her. All the servants laughed, and applauded her spirit, and Mrs. Barker said she had a large acquaintance in London, and that when she returned thither, she would try to procure her a place where she would not thus be buried alive. Hannah thanked her, and said she should accept the very first that offered, let Mrs. Moor, Mrs. Green, or Rachel, say what they would against it.

From that time Hannah became more than ever regardless of pleasing Mrs. Moor. Hoping soon to quit that excellent woman's house, she scarcely cared how often she vexed or offended her; and notwithstanding all her prohibitions, and the remonstrances of Mrs. Green or Rachel, she persevered in her visits to her new friends at the manor-house, her intercourse with whom, rendered her daily more vain, giddy, and self-willed.

About a fortnight after the commencement of this dangerous acquaintance, Mr. Vernon, a gentleman of large fortune, came, together with his wife, a gay

fashionable lady, to spend a month with Sir William and lady Ormond. They had been there only a few days, when Mrs. Vernon's woman was taken so ill, as to be obliged to quit her situation, and Hannah, without even informing Mrs. Moor of her intention, offered herself in her stead. Mrs. Vernon was pleased with her beauty, and interested by the account she gave of herself, and upon her being strongly recommended by Mrs. Barker, consented to take her into her service.

Hannah returned home over-joyed, and without making the least apology to Mrs. Moor, for the step she had taken without consulting her, said, she had promised to remove to the manor-house the next day, which she accordingly did, and about a fortnight afterwards, accompanied her lady to London.

Scarcely did she condescend to take leave of her sister, whom she now considered as greatly her inferior, and six months passed before she wrote her a single line. Her letter, which was dated from Vernon Lodge, was so ill written and spelt, that Rachel could not without difficulty read it; but having at length done so, her vexation on that subject, yielded to a concern of a far more serious nature. The letter, although short, contained expressions denoting such vanity and want of principle, as greatly shocked her. The conclusion contained these words, which for the sake of the reader, we shall give in the way they ought to have been written:—

“London, my dear Rachel, is a delightful place for those who have plenty of money and are their own mistresses. What would I give if this was my case! When I came there first, I thought I should have had nothing to do but dress, and see fine sights; but I soon found my mistake. Whilst my lady was going to plays, routs and assemblies, she expected me to work and get up her linen, of which she wears a most unreasonable quantity.

“and then she staid out so very late, that it was
“generally two or three o’clock in the morning, be-
“fore I could get to sleep. My lady used to lie in
“bed till ten or eleven, but I was obliged to have
“every thing ready in her dressing room long before
“that time; for she often rang the bell before nine,
“and if I was not quite dressed, and ready to go to
“her in a moment, she would be so angry, that I
“never dared to remain in bed after eight o’clock,
“at the latest, so that I was often half dead from want
“of sleep, and could not help thinking how com-
“fortably we lived at Mrs. Moor’s when we were
“in bed every night before eleven. I cannot say
“I am much better off now we are in the country, for
“as my lady is continually either visiting, or receiv-
“ing company at home, my situation is but little
“different from what it was in London, except that
“we do not keep quite such late hours. I hope,
“however, that I shall not long continue in this state
“of confinement and slavery. I may soon perhaps
“be my own mistress, keep a maid, and ride in my
“coach, and look those in the face who now think
“themselves my betters. There is a gentleman of
“large fortune,—but I will say nothing more at
“present. When I am the wife of this gentleman, you
“may perhaps hear from me again.”

Rachel lost no time in answering this letter. Hers was filled with the most affectionate and earnest exhortations against encouraging vanity and ambition.

“Believe me, dear Hannah,” said she, “the love
“of dress, pleasure and admiration, has caused many
“young women, who, without it, might have been
“happy and respected, to suffer during many years
“want and misery, or which is infinitely worse, to
“live in luxurious infamy, and to die in wretched-
“ness and disgrace. Let me conjure you, my sister,
“as you would wish to escape such a fate, give not

"up your heart to vanity and ambition, ~~nor~~ imagine that gentlemen 'of large fortune,' are, except in a very few instances, inclined to raise young women in obscure situations to their own level; they much oftener seek to debase them. But if you could succeed in drawing in such a gentleman to make you his wife, your happiness most probably would rather be diminished than increased by it. But even were we sure of the contrary, let us not, my dear Hannah, take any improper steps to raise ourselves, but do our duty, and trust the rest to Providence, assured that happen what may, it must then be for our advantage, although we may not at the time be able to perceive in what manner it will conduce to it."

Not receiving any answer to this letter, Rachel wrote another, but as that shared the same fate, she concluded her sister had quitted Mrs. Vernon's service. She had lived with Mrs. Moor nearly six years when that lady received the distressing intelligence, that the banker, in whose hands the principal part of her property was placed, had failed. Being obliged greatly to reduce her expenses, and finding herself unable to pay Rachel her accustomed wages, she offered to recommend her to a relation she had in London, who would, she knew, be glad to have her for her attendant, and pay her even more liberally than she had ever done. Rachel was grieved at this proposal, and looking at Mrs. Moor with tears in her eyes, "Dearest madam," said she, "can you believe me so ungrateful as to desert, in her distress, the kind and generous friend to whom I owe so much? Permit me, I entreat you, to remain with you, and enjoy the inexpressible pleasure of still contributing to the utmost of my power to your comfort and happiness."

"But, my dear girl," answered Mrs. Moor, "do you consider that as I am now under the necessity of parting with most of my servants; if you remain with

me, I shall be obliged to set you to do many things to which you have been unaccustomed, besides reducing your wages one half?"

"Reduce them as much as you please," said Rachel earnestly. "Dismiss, if you choose, all your other servants. Set me to do any thing, for the more I do for you the happier I shall be. If you are in want of money, consider my savings, which, together with the interest upon them, are now in your hands, as your own. Do any thing which can render you easy. If you permit me to stay with you, under any circumstances, do not fear but I shall be happy enough."

Mrs. Moor tenderly embraced the grateful Rachel, whose cheerfulness revived when she found nothing more was said about her departure. Her worthy mistress parted with all her other servants, not one of whom was disinterested enough to remain with her upon reduced wages; and having taken a smaller house in the same neighbourhood, retired to it, accompanied by Rachel and a young woman, whom she had hired to do the harder work of the place.

The loss of Mrs. Moor's property was soon followed by another misfortune, which rendered Rachel's attentions more than ever necessary to her. She was attacked by a paralytic disorder, which entirely deprived her of the use of her limbs, without affecting her intellects. It now formed the whole business of Rachel's life to comfort, and render herself useful to her benefactress under this afflicting dispensation of Providence. She read to her, worked for her, kept her accounts, answered her letters, managed her household affairs, prepared her food, and was to her at once an attentive nurse, faithful servant, and affectionate friend. After having for above four years exhibited a pattern of patient suffering, worthy the life she had led, that excellent woman expired in the arms of Rachel, who during her last illness, which

was long and painful, scarcely quitted her night nor day, and who was obliged to summon all her christian fortitude to her assistance, to enable her to support the loss of one so dear to her with becoming resignation.

She had immediately the offer of several advantageous places ; but considering it her duty to choose that situation which would not only be most comfortable to herself, but would likewise give her the prospect of being most useful to her fellow-creatures, and knowing that a school had for some time been wanting in the neighbourhood, she, after seriously reflecting upon the many duties which such an undertaking would lay upon her, resolved to open one. She therefore hired a small convenient house, with a good garden, which fortunately happened to be vacant, at a very short distance from that in which Mrs. Moor had, for the last four years, lived. With a part of her savings she furnished it in a plain but comfortable manner ; and as soon as her little arrangements were completed, she informed the farmers in the neighbourhood that she was ready to instruct their children in needle-work, reading, writing and accounts, upon very reasonable terms. Mrs. Moor had bequeathed to her her clothes and two hundred pounds, which sum she put out to interest, resolving to let it accumulate, as a resource against the wants of old age or sickness.

She was so well known, and so much respected by all the inhabitants of the village and neighbourhood, that she soon obtained several scholars. All who could afford to pay the moderate quarterly sum she demanded, were eager to send their children to her ; and those little boys and girls whose parents were too poor to do so, she instructed without payment, only requiring that they should be sent perfectly clean, both in their persons and clothing. Her mornings from nine o'clock till one, and her evenings from

three till five, were employed in attending to her little scholars, all of whom both loved and revered her. The winter evenings she spent either in reading or working; and as she was a very expeditious needle-woman, she found time to assist many of her poor neighbours who had large families, by making clothes, and knitting stockings for their children. She also taught them to make several cheap, nourishing and savory dishes, according to the recipes published by Mrs. Hannah Moore, in "*The Way to Plenty*," and in the "*Reports of the Society for bettering the Condition of the Poor*." She was always ready to advise and comfort them, she nursed them when sick, she endeavoured at all times, by her precepts and example, to guide them in the way to Heaven; in a word, she spent her life in doing all the good in her power.

Behind her house was a small inclosure, well stocked with fowls, which, having reared and fed entirely upon potatoes, she sold with their eggs at the next market town. On the fine summer evenings she employed herself in weeding and watering her garden: which, with the assistance of an old man, to whom she was particularly kind, was rendered very neat and productive.

Another of her most favourite, as well as profitable employments, was the management of bees; in which she was remarkably skilful, and consequently fortunate. The window of her school-room faced the north, and looked into her garden, part of which was planted with borage, white speedwell, mignionette, wall-flowers, poppies, and such other flowers as her industrious little favourites appeared most fond of. Against a hedge opposite to the above-mentioned window, stood her bee-house. When a swarm happened to take wing during school hours, all the children were permitted to quit their books, work, writing, &c. and enjoy the sight. One was allowed

to ring the pan, whilst Rachel shook the bees into a clean hive, with a couple of sticks set across near the top, and without any dressing, which she knew to be not only useless, but unpleasant to its destined inhabitants. As she had always a hive in readiness, this business was generally completed, and the books, work, writing, &c. resumed in the course of an hour.

Of her honey and wax, she generally sold as much as, together with the profits of her poultry yard, paid the rent of her house and garden; always reserving a sufficient quantity of the first named article to sweeten her coffee, as well as her fruit pies and puddings, which in summer, furnished her principal dish at dinner and supper. She also reserved a jar full of it, to boil with vinegar, for any of her poor neighbours who had coughs or sore throats.

Nothing occurred to interrupt her tranquillity, except her anxiety about her sister, of whom she had heard nothing during upwards of eight years. She knew not whether to suppose her dead or alive; but was almost inclined even to wish the former; well knowing that if living, her silence could proceed from no good cause.

One evening, when her scholars were gone, she sat down beside a bright fire, to drink her accustomed dish of coffee. It was the latter end of January;—the night was dark and stormy; the casements rattled; she felt thankful to Heaven for giving her a comfortable habitation, where she might shelter from the inclemency of the weather, and was grieved to think that many of her fellow-creatures were perhaps at that moment enduring its fury.

She was roused from her reverie by a gentle knocking at the door. She arose and opened it, and to her great surprise, saw a woman tottering under the weight of a child about fifteen months old, who entered without speaking, and sunk, apparently quite exhausted, upon the first chair she came to. Ra-

chel surveyed her earnestly, and perceived by the unsteady light of the fire, that her face was pale, her eyes sunk, her frame meagre, and that her clothes, although tattered and dirty, were made of showy materials. Seeing her ready to faint, Rachel brought her a dish of coffee, which she drank eagerly, and seemed a little revived by it. She then, after a short pause, begged to know her name, and how she could be of service to her.

"Have you then forgotten me?" asked the poor creature in a low tremulous tone. Rachel started and turned pale, for the voice, and something in the countenance of the miserable object on which she gazed with so much compassion, assured her that she was the once gay and beautiful Hannah! Speech and motion were for some time denied her; at length a shower of tears came to her relief, and falling upon her neck, she exclaimed, "Oh my poor sister! and can it indeed be you whom I see in this wretched state?"

Hannah was unable to reply; the violence of her emotion shook her exhausted frame. After a few moments silence, "And this child?" said Rachel. "Is mine," answered Hannah, in a voice rendered almost inarticulate by weakness.

Rachel shuddered:—"And have you a husband?" she at length asked with eagerness, yet looking as if she dreaded a reply.

"I had one," said Hannah, "but I cannot answer any more questions now, for I am quite worn out." So saying she sunk back in her chair, and her face became still paler.

Rachel hastened to put some broth to warm for her, and some milk for the little girl, who scarcely seemed able to wait until it was ready. She soon despatched her portion, then laying herself on the floor in a snug corner, fell asleep; but her poor

mother having taken a few spoonful, laid down her basin, saying, "I can eat no more, I feel very ill."

Rachel entreated her to go to bed, to which she gladly consented. Having kindly assisted her to undress, she placed a hand-bell by her, desiring her to ring if she wanted any thing, and having tenderly wished her good night, returned to the kitchen, and finding the little girl still asleep, took her in her arms, and placed her in her own bed; then laid herself down beside her without taking off her own clothes, that she might be ready in a moment should her sister ring.

Being unable to sleep she arose very early, and unlocking a cupboard in which she kept a little board of such simple medicines, and restoratives as she was in the habit of giving to her poor neighbours, she took out some tapioca, which she boiled and sweetened, and having put into it some ginger wine, of which she made a small quantity every year for such purposes, she went with it to her sister's room, which she entered without making any noise. She found her awake, but too ill to rise. In the most affectionate manner she presented her what she had prepared, begging her to eat some of it. Poor Hannah took her hand, and pressing it said, whilst tears started in her eyes, "I see, my dearest Rachel, I was not deceived when I thought you were too good to desert, in your prosperity, your wretched sister."

"Were I capable of acting in that manner," replied Rachel, "I should be most unworthy the blessings, which it hath pleased Heaven to bestow on me. I know not by what means you have been reduced to such misery, but I see you are miserable, and I bless God for enabling me to relieve you and your poor child."

"Alas!" exclaimed Hannah, sighing deeply, "my poor Mary is innocent, her sufferings are only such as poverty occasions; but my misery is of a kind

which no one can relieve." Then, after a moment's pause, she added, "I have been a foolish, vain, and guilty creature. Should it ever please Heaven to grant me sufficient strength, I will tell you every thing."

"I feel most deeply interested in whatever concerns you," said Rachel, much affected; "and when you are able to relate it, if the history will not be too painful to you, I shall be very desirous to hear an account of every thing which has befallen you."

"It will rather be a comfort to me," replied Hannah, "to open my mind to you, who, as you are so good, and so well read in scripture, may perhaps afford me some consolation." Here a sudden faintness seizing her, put an end to the conversation.

Rachel seeing her so alarmingly ill, sent immediately for a physician; but this expense she found it would be useless to incur a second time, as he pronounced his patient in a deep decline, and past all hope of cure. Hannah heard this intelligence with a degree of horror, which showed how terrible the consciousness of guilt made death appear to her. Rachel endeavoured to soothe her agitated mind, bade her to pray to God for pardon, and trust in his mercy.

"And can there be mercy, then, for such a wretch as I am?" asked the poor sufferer in a tone of despair.

"That God, who is all goodness and love," replied Rachel, "has, through our blessed Saviour, promised mercy to all who truly repent."

"But what means have I," asked Hannah in the same tone, "of proving that I *truly* repent? Alas! I have no time, no opportunity; I am hurried away at the very moment when I become fully conscious of my wickedness!"

"You cannot indeed, my dear sister," said Rachel, taking her hand, "prove your penitence to

your fellow-creatures, but he who sees your heart will distinguish between true repentance, caused by hatred of the sins you have committed, and that occasioned by fear of punishment."

"But how," asked Hannah, "can I avoid feeling this fear?"

"To avoid it entirely," answered Rachel, "is neither possible nor to be wished; but if you are truly penitent, you will humbly resign yourself to the will of your Creator, assured, that he will do with you what is right."

"I feel," answered Hannah, "that what I have hitherto mistaken for repentance, was indeed principally fear. Help me, therefore, my dear and only friend, to pray that God will purify my heart, and render it capable of such true repentance as he will vouchsafe to accept."

"If you pray sincerely, and from your heart," replied Rachel, "your prayers will be heard; for our heavenly Father is ever ready to listen to those who truly lament their faults."

"O then!" exclaimed Hannah, clasping her hands, "I shall be heard, for from my soul do I both lament and detest them, and most thankfully would I suffer any thing which might atone for them. Gladly would I live though deprived of every thing that can render life comfortable. But that must not be,—Oh, my God, I submit to thy decree, 'not my will, but thine be done.'"

Rachel tenderly embraced her, and shed tears of joy, to see her in such a frame of mind. After a pause, she asked her if she should read to her out of the bible, to which she thankfully consented, and having listened very attentively for some time, grew more calm.

From that time her whole comfort arose from the perusal of that invaluable book, which was seldom out of her hands, from listening to the conversation

of her excellent sister, and from lifting up her heart to that all-merciful Being who "desireth not that any should perish, but that all should repent, return, and live." She expressed the deepest contrition for the sins and follies of her past life, for the good she had left undone, and the evil she had committed.

Rachel let no opportunity pass of trying to make her sensible of the nature of true repentance, reading and explaining such passages of scripture as treated upon the subject, to all which Hannah listened with attention and gratitude. Although no material change took place in her health, yet from the nourishing food, and kind attentions she received from her sister, she recovered her strength in the course of a fortnight so far as to be able to sit up a part of each day. In this state she continued until the beginning of March, which was about three weeks: during which time, at intervals, as she could support the exertion, she related her history nearly in the following words:—

"The letter I wrote to you, my dearest sister, on our return from London, must have given you an idea of the life I led at Mr. Vernon's. Had I taken the kind advice and warnings contained in the two you addressed to me, I might have escaped all the misery I have suffered. But I let the precious moments which Heaven lent me, for a far different purpose, pass in a manner the remembrance of which is most painful to me.

"Mr. and Mrs. Vernon were engaged in a constant round of dissipation, and paid no regard to the conduct of their servants. Provided every thing was in order for them, they cared not how their domestics passed that portion of their time which was not wanted for their immediate service. We had no family prayers, as we used to have at Mrs. Moor's, nor was any kind of instruction or good advice ever given us. Indeed, farther than what concerned their own con-

venience, they appeared regardless what might become of us, either in this world or the next ; and this, not through ill-nature, nor a cruel disposition, for when they were asked, they often gave considerable sums of money for charitable purposes ; but they had been brought up to regard nothing but pleasure, and provided they believed their servants were commonly honest, and capable of doing well what they wanted to have done, they cared not how little of religion or goodness they either knew or practised. They generally went themselves to church every Sunday morning, and a part of us were at liberty to do the same ; but whether we did so or not, they never gave themselves the trouble to inquire. On Sunday evenings either Mr. or Mrs. Vernon went out, in which case the family was left to itself, and those hours which should have been devoted to instruction and improvement, were wasted in idleness or stained by vice ; or else they had gay parties at home, often concerts of music, at which times the servants felt as dissipated as their superiors, and instead of thinking of any thing which might tend to promote their eternal welfare, their whole attention was fixed upon vanity and folly.

“ After spending five months in London we returned to Vernon Lodge, an elegant seat in a genteel neighbourhood. Soon after our arrival there, Mr. Charlton, Mrs. Vernon’s brother, a gentleman of about two and twenty years of age, possessed of a large estate, came there from Oxford to spend the summer vacation. He looked much at me the first time I entered the room after he came, and once or twice, when we happened to meet without the presence of any other person, he paid me some foolish compliments, which immediately brought to my mind what my poor mother had so often said, ‘ that her Hannah’s beauty would one day make her fortune,’ and I conceived the silly, vain and blameable idea

of endeavouring to draw this young man in to marry me. To effect my purpose, I spent more time than ever in trying to make myself appear to advantage; nor were my pains, I had reason to believe, entirely thrown away. Mr. Charlton seemed daily more taken with me; and although he never declared in direct words that he loved me, the compliments he paid me, and his general manner towards me, seemed, I thought, so fully to express it, that I felt certain I should one day be his wife, and in the pride of my heart, wrote you the letter which you so well and so kindly answered. Nor was this all; I was silly enough to give myself airs of importance to my fellow-servants, and even to hint, that I had hopes of not long being among them. But if I ever had any chance of succeeding in my designs, they were frustrated by my silly exultation, which was too ill concealed to escape Mrs. Vernon's observation. She saw through my plan, and severely reproving her brother, who, she doubted not, had, by his conduct encouraged my hopes, and whom she therefore considered equally to blame with myself, she dismissed me from her service, after giving me a long, and as I now think, very kind lecture.

"Mrs. Vernon, who did not, when she gave herself the trouble to reflect, want humanity, gave me a written recommendation to Mrs. Melford, an old lady her relation, who lived at a great distance, and in so retired a manner, as she hoped would not afford me any opportunity of practising my dangerous arts, as she called them.

"I lingered sometime in the house under different pretences, hoping that Mr. Charlton would seek me out, and propose carrying me off. But I had soon the mortification of finding that nothing was further from his thoughts, for passing by the parlour door, which was half open, I heard him say, 'Surely sister, you must have thought me mad, when you sup-

posed I had any intention of *marrying* this girl, who must be as weak as I know her to be vain, if she ever believed I had.'

"This speech, which was accompanied by a contemptuous laugh, provoked me so much, that I lost no time in quitting the house, which, together with its inhabitants, was become hateful to me.

"When I arrived at Mrs. Melford's I had not saved a single guinea. My new mistress dressed very plainly; and had therefore no cast-off finery to bestow upon me. The wages, however, which she gave me, would have been more than sufficient to have supplied my wants, could I have resolved to confine them within such bounds as my true interest, and my situation in life, rendered expedient: but my vanity was as great as it had ever been, and had they been doubled, I should have laid out every shilling in useless finery, for the more I had, the more I longed for.

"Mrs. Melford was what is commonly called a religious woman, and spent much of her time in reading and prayer. She was constantly talking to me about religion, a subject to which I was very little inclined to attend. Indeed, I never could understand much of what she said, except that it was not in our power to do any thing that was pleasing to God; that we were all, from the highest to the lowest, lost in the deepest degree of corruption and wickedness, from which it was impossible for us to raise ourselves, and that if we were saved at all, it must be entirely through the righteousness of another. This kind of religion was not likely to correct my faults or improve my disposition; on the contrary, it increased the first, and confirmed the badness of the latter; for I thought, that if my right actions were of no value in the sight of God, and I might be saved by the merits of another, it was not worth my while to restrain my evil inclinations, or deny myself

such indulgencies as lay within my reach. My mistress appeared to entertain no doubts of her own salvation, yet was continually declaring herself the chief and worst of sinners; so I thought it was impossible that I could be worse than that, and of course should have as good a chance in the next world as she could have; and as it was out of my power to help myself, I resolved to trust to the righteousness of our Saviour, who she said loved those most who felt themselves to be sinners, and make myself easy and think as little as possible about it. I pretended to be very grave and demure when with my mistress, and having learned some of her religious phrases, made use of them upon all occasions, so that she fancied she had made me quite a convert, as she called it, when in reality she had only rendered me a hypocrite. I joined her in railing against all kinds of amusement, and pronouncing eternal condemnation on all who partook of them, as well as upon all who thought in any degree differently from her.

"For the restraint I put upon myself in her presence, I made ample amends at other times. Mrs. Melford kept four other servants besides myself, every one of whom pretended to be very religious. For some time I believed the housekeeper to be really so; but I soon discovered that she often brought her mistress bills for articles used in the house, which had never entered it. A few instances of this kind happening to come to my knowledge, I watched her narrowly, and soon perceived she cheated her lady in the grossest manner, and was truly, what, after her example, she often called herself, "a miserable sinner."

"I would willingly have acted in the same manner, had I possessed the opportunity of so doing, but that not being the case, I turned my thoughts to another kind of deceit and disobedience. My mind being completely set upon vanity and folly, I felt very dis-

contented with the regular, confined life I was obliged to lead, from which however I was soon freed, by finding that the chambermaid was frequently absent at night, and returned as soon as the door was open in the morning. When I first observed this, she said she had been spending the night with her sick mother; but I soon found it was a frequent practice with her and the cook, and that they let each other in and out.

"What wretches," exclaimed Rachel, "was it your misfortune to get among! Ah! why did you not expose them all? How greatly would you have been valued by your mistress if you had; and how sweet would have been the approbation of your own heart!"

"Would that I had done so!" replied Hannah. "It was my interest as well as duty: but my mind was then so set upon vanity and wickedness, that I felt much more disposed to partake of their crimes, than to expose them; and the religious opinions which my mistress had taught me, hardened my heart against all fear or remorse. I thought that every one was desperately wicked, and that calling upon Jesus Christ a few hours before my death, and declaring my full trust in his merits, would save me from all the punishment threatened, as the consequence of sin, and effectually secure my eternal salvation. Possessed with this belief, and entirely persuaded that he who led the worst life, had as good a chance to go to heaven as the greatest saint who ever lived upon earth, I went on without dread or compunction.

"I found that my fellow-servants did not so frequently leave the house to nurse sick mothers, but for the purpose of joining a number of thoughtless, profligate, young men and women, who met once or twice a week at a neighbouring public house, to dance or play at cards. I readily consented to go with

them, and as you know I was always extravagantly fond of these amusements, in both which I was encouraged by my vain, mistaken mother, I never failed to be present upon all these occasions : nor did I cease to frequent these parties, although I found the most dishonest means were practised by many whom I met there, to enable them to support the expense which attended them ; nor was I deterred by the disgrace and entire loss of character, which several young women suffered. Indeed, pride alone prevented me from becoming as bad as the worst of them. I did not choose to forfeit all chance of marrying to advantage, which I knew I must do if I lost my character, nor did I like to place myself upon a level with the lowest creatures upon earth. Having no restraints upon my mind, it was natural that I should every day grow worse, I accordingly began to join the cook and chamber-maid in taking many things out of the house which did not belong to us ; and it is difficult to say to what lengths we might have proceeded, had it not been for the arrival of a young lady, who was niece to my mistress, and came to pay her a long visit. She was very sensible, and had been brought up in habits of vigilance and economy. She soon discovered how shamefully her aunt was imposed upon by her house-keeper, and likewise the kind of lives which myself and the inferior servants led. She revealed the whole to Mrs. Melford, who, being convinced of the truth of her accounts, flew into a violent passion, called us base, ungrateful wretches, and without considering that, according to the creed which she had laboured to teach us, we had no power of ourselves, either to do what is right or avoid what is wrong, dismissed us all at an hour's warning, and consequently without characters.

"I took a lodging in the house of an acquaintance in the neighbouring town, and from time to time offered myself to several ladies who were in want of

servants ; but as they all required a character from my last place, and I had none to produce, I remained in a very miserable state, for my last shilling was gone, and I had sold the best part of my clothes, to supply me with the mere necessities of life.

"I was in this wretched condition when I heard that an old lady in the town, who was remarkable for covetousness and ill-temper, was in want of a servant ; as indeed, I was told was the case with her at least every month, for that nobody would live with her who had the power of getting into a more comfortable situation. Little as such a place suited my inclination, I was glad to go in quest of it ; and as Mrs. Benson had been a fortnight without the offer of a servant, she hired me upon the recommendation of the woman with whom I lodged, who had once lived with her.

"I found her temper full as bad as it had been represented to be. She was so covetous, that common necessities were all that could be procured in her house ; and so vigilant, that it was impossible to cheat her out of a single farthing. I resolved, however, to bear with her temper, and submit to the discomforts of my situation for one year, at the end of which time I hoped she could not refuse me such a character as might enable me to procure one more to my satisfaction. This resolution I put in practice, and so carefully did I guard my temper and restrain my inclinations, that at the conclusion of the year, my mistress was extremely unwilling to part with me, offering if I would continue with her, to increase my wages and allow me several little indulgences, which would have rendered my way of living more comfortable."

"And ought not that," said Rachel, "to have taught you that we have some power to direct our actions ? If the poor motive of a little worldly advantage could enable you to check your evil inclinations

and command your temper, what would not the dread of suffering the awful punishments with which sin is threatened, and the hope of obtaining the favour of God and eternal happiness, have empowered you to suffer or to do, provided such ideas had been as early and as earnestly impressed upon your mind, as those of vanity and short-sighted selfishness unfortunately were; or if you had been so happy as to meet with a mistress, who had instructed you in the principles of true religion, which the scripture, in words not to be misunderstood, assures us is this: "to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God!"

"Happy had it been for me," replied Hannah sighing, "had I been so instructed; but alas! the seeds of vanity and self-will, which my poor mother's mistaken fondness and excessive indulgence sowed and fostered in my mind, were ripened by Mrs. Melford's false and dangerous views of religion, into crimes which now press most heavily upon my heart: but to proceed with my story.

"At the end of the year, my mistress finding I was resolved to quit her, recommended me to a gentleman, a distant relation of her own, who lives about thirty miles distant from hence, and who was in want of a housekeeper. Oh, my dear Rachel, could I have prevailed upon myself to follow my true interest, by behaving as well at Mr. Smith's, as I had done at Mrs. Benson's, how happily, how creditably might I have lived! He was one of the worthiest and at the same time most unsuspecting of men. He was charitable and indulgent to excess, and so little inclined to believe ill of any one, that it required the most positive proofs to induce him to do so; and although he often found himself imposed upon by the artful and unprincipled, yet he continued to judge of others' hearts by his own, which was an openness, benevolence and kindness. He reposed the

most perfect confidence in me, and what a wretch must I have been to abuse it ! Yet, with shame and remorse must I acknowledge, that my conduct towards him was the very reverse of what it ought to have been.

“ Like the housekeeper at Mrs. Melford’s, I cheated and imposed upon him in the most shameful manner, at the same time keeping the fairest outside, and pretending to be very religious. I was not less vain than I had ever been ; but the desire of becoming rich was still stronger than my vanity, and as I thought I could never have a better opportunity to possess myself of a good sum of money than I had at present, I resolved not to neglect it. Accordingly I did every thing in my power to please him, and such was his generosity and kindness, that had I really been as honest and as good as I pretended to be, I might have lived with him in the happiest manner, might every year have laid by money, and never should have wanted a friend ; but my only wish was, to deceive him for a few years, and then choose some situation better suited to my vanity and love of pleasure.

“ Several men in the neighbourhood wished to become my lovers, but I did not particularly like any of them ; and being still in hopes that I should some time or other marry to more advantage, I did not encourage any one, until, when I had lived rather more than three years with Mr. Smith, I became acquainted with James Collins, a house carpenter, who was employed in fitting up a large mansion, which had lately been built in the neighbourhood.

“ I frequently met him at the house of a farmer, to whom he was related, and with whose wife I was very intimate. He was very handsome and a perfect master in the art of flattery. His conversation was lively, and as he had travelled much to different parts of the kingdom, the accounts he gave of what

he had seen were very amusing. I soon perceived that he paid me particular attention, with which I was not displeased ; for I understood that he was a very good workman, and got large wages ; so I thought that, if no body better offered, I might, when I had plundered Mr. Smith a few years longer, even resolve to marry him. I did not think his continual habit of swearing, nor his occasional drunkenness, any serious objection, because I had several times heard him declare, that if ever he married he was determined to become perfectly sober, as all his delight would then be to see his wife, who he was resolved should be very handsome, have every thing genteel and convenient about her.

“ Having for some time paid me great attention, and many fine compliments, he declared himself my lover, and told me if I would marry him he would take a house in the neighbourhood, where he knew he should have plenty of employment.

“ I ought, at the first step, to have insisted upon his leaving off swearing and drinking ; but about the first I did not care, and doubted not but I should easily persuade him to give up the latter, particularly as I had so often heard him declare it to be his fixed resolution to do so, when married. I would not however consent to marry him immediately, because I thought it possible I might do better, and if that should not happen, I wished to spend a year or two longer in my present profitable situation. I however permitted him to come to my master’s house two or three times a week, after he and the house-maid and boy were gone to bed, and entertained him with the best it afforded, and he seldom departed until three or four o’clock in the morning.

“ What the consequence of these nightly meetings might have proved, I dare not venture to say ; but they had continued only a few weeks, when I perceived a great alteration in my master’s look and

manner towards me. He appeared to mark and observe all my words and actions ; asked me many significant questions about my management in the family ; and examined the bills I presented him, with scrupulous exactness, whereas he never used to do more than merely glance his eye over them. I likewise observed him carefully examining a large bundle of papers, which I knew to be bills and accounts which he had at various times received from me, and in which there were abundance of overcharges.

“ My guilty conscience took alarm, and I resolved to avoid the disgrace of a sudden dismissal from his service, by leaving it, as it might appear, by my own choice : but I was prevented from taking this step, by my master’s giving me warning, at the same time telling me his reason for so doing, which were such as I had but too much cause to expect. He then took the trouble of representing to me, in very strong colours, the greatness of my crimes, and upon my saying that I was no worse than many others, he bade me beware of ‘ following a multitude to do evil ;’ adding, ‘ our blessed Saviour himself has assured us, that, at the day of judgment, every one will be rewarded or punished, according as their own lives have been good or bad, without the smallest regard to the merits or faults of any other person ; and whosoever denies this, makes him a deceiver.’ ”

“ He concluded by telling me, that I might remain another week in his house, in order to try to procure a service, wherein he sincerely wished I might behave better than I had done in his ; but that his regard for truth would not permit him to give me any recommendation ; on the contrary, should any one apply to him for my character, he should feel himself bound to explain the reasons which induced him to part with me.

“ I had before experienced the difficulty of pro-

curring a very indifferent place without a recommendation ; I knew that no family of any credit would receive into it, one who had been detected in acts of dishonesty ; I therefore resolved to marry James Collins, though, having always flattered myself with the expectation that my beauty would make my fortune, it was no small vexation to me to think of becoming the wife of a journeyman. As I did not however know what to do better, I that night, when he came to visit me, told him, I had suddenly resolved to leave my master ; to which he answered that he knew it already, having met the house-maid about three hours before, who told him, that happening to pass by the parlour door, which was open, she had heard her master give me warning, at the same time accusing me of many acts of dishonesty. James then asked me what I intended to do ? At which I was greatly shocked, as I expected he would have immediately pressed me to become his wife. Seeing me change colour, he said he should be very glad to marry me directly, but that he did not think it prudent, as he had often heard me say, to settle, before we possessed between us such a sum of money as would enable him to buy a small stock, and begin business for himself.

"I am ashamed to acknowledge, my dear Rachel, that I did not scruple to make him believe, that I had in my master's hands, and elsewhere, considerably more than I was really worth."

"How could you venture," exclaimed Rachel, "to impose thus upon the man whom you intended to marry, and who, you knew, must soon come to the knowledge of the deceit you were practising upon him ?"

"I had no hope," replied Hannah, "of getting a tolerable place ; I knew James could get a great deal of money if he would ; and as I believed him to be very good-natured, I thought when he was married

and could not help himself, we should live at least as well as most other married people do.

“When I had given James this account of my circumstances, he became as eager for our immediate marriage, as he had before appeared indifferent about it. He told me that he had a very nice comfortable cottage and garden of his own, in which his mother then lived, and in which there was room enough for us for the present, until we could get a house that would suit us. In short, we agreed to keep our plan a secret from every one, and to be married upon that day week, which scheme we put in execution.

“When I left my master, he paid me three years’ wages which he had in his hands, bidding me remember the mercy with which I had been treated, and let it make an impression on my heart; adding, ‘You know but too well, that instead of paying you this money, I might, if I had chosen it, have sent you to a prison.’

“I made the most humble acknowledgments to him for his goodness, and professed to feel the sincerest repentance for my past faults, and the strongest determination to avoid the like in future; and such was the goodness of his heart, that, softened by the appearance of sorrow which I put on, he parted from me with much kindness, telling me he sincerely wished me every thing which was good, but above all, that I might lead an honest and pious life; always remembering that God is every where present, and that he alone who truly repents of his sins, and strives to do righteousness, can be acceptable in his sight.

“What he said to me, made some impression on my mind. I wept all day, and my sorrow might have proved of that godly sort which leadeth to repentance; had not my mind been filled with the fatal notion, that as I was to be saved by the merits of another, and that nothing I could do was of any real importance, it was not worth my while to tease myself

about it ; since if I was one of the elect, I should be saved of course, and if I was not, I should vainly strive to become such. I threw therefore all good thoughts from my mind, only continuing to use the kind of language I had learned from Mrs. Melford, calling myself the chief of sinners, and hoping that at my last hour I should, in consequence of my calling upon the Lord, and trusting in his merits, be translated from a life of vanity and deceit, to one of everlasting happiness.

“ At the time agreed upon, I was married, and my husband having before taken the boxes which contained my clothes, to his mother's cottage, conducted me thither also. I expected, from his description, to have seen a comfortable little habitation, but found it a most wretched one, consisting of only two rooms, and miserably out of repair. I did not strive to conceal my disappointment and indignation, but reproached him violently for having deceived me. He answered in a surly tone, that I ought to have examined for myself ; but added, that when he had received my money, he would look out for something which might please me better. I gave him what I had from my master, and upon his asking me particulars concerning the rest of my property, I was forced to own that what I had given him, was all I was worth in the world. He flew into a violent passion, swearing that I had deceived him, in the most infamous manner, and that I should have cause to repent it the longest day I had to live. I tried to persuade him that he had misunderstood the account I had given him ; but he repeated my very words, telling me, that I might set my heart at rest, for that it never should be in my power to impose upon him a second time ; and as for ever having a better house, he would not advise me to hope for it, as the money I had given him would but just be enough to pay his debts.

"His mother, who was a decent-looking, well-spoken woman, tried to reconcile us, and persuade us to make the best of our situation, such as it was, and by industry and economy, strive to improve it. Above all, she begged us to forgive each other, and endeavour to live in peace: but we had scarcely patience to listen to her, and instead of kindness and mutual affection, we passed our time, whenever we were together, in disputes and reproaches, such as might naturally be expected from two unprincipled, violent-tempered people, who had begun their married life, by grossly deceiving one another.

"My husband spent a great part of his time, and nearly all his wages, at a neighbouring public-house. He often left me for two or three nights, and seldom came home sober. On my part, instead of making the best of my hard lot, which was entirely the consequence of my own folly and wickedness, and striving to amend him by setting him a good example, by acknowledging how wrongly I had acted, and trying to persuade him to endeavour to atone for what was past, by behaving better for the future, I gave way to my natural idleness and bad temper, and became a complete slattern and scold. As James seldom brought me any money, I sold from time to time all the useless finery, of which my boxes were full, which, though it had cost me so many pounds, brought me a mere trifle.

"My mother-in-law was a truly good creature, whose only fault had been, her excessive fondness for, and blindness to, the ill qualities of her son.—She tried to persuade me to do my duty, to the best of my power, and to submit patiently to the misfortunes I had brought upon myself: she told me she had herself passed through a life of great hardship; but had always endeavoured to act right, to the best of her knowledge; and trusted, through the mercy of God, as promised by our Lord Jesus Christ, her

faults would be pardoned, and that after a few more years of trial, she should be removed to that state which her all-good and all-wise Father knew to be best and fittest for her.

"I was much struck with the difference between her religion, and that of Mrs. Melford, and having accompanied her several times to her place of worship, I began to perceive that I had entertained most false notions, such as suited my bad inclinations, but not such as were preached by our Lord Jesus Christ; who came to turn us from our sins, not to save us in them.

"These thoughts began to make some little impression on my mind; but bad habits are not easily conquered. It requires many a hard struggle, before they can be brought to act right, who have long been accustomed to do evil.

"My situation was truly miserable. My husband's temper became every day worse; I was in want of almost every comfort, and, to add to my wretchedness, found that I should soon become a mother. I made what preparation I could for this event, and the time passed heavily away, until that at which I expected it to take place was within a few days arrived. James had been absent all night; I had no money in the house, and very little food. His mother, who however had no more influence over him than myself, was proposing to go in search of him, when, it was about seven in the evening, we heard a knocking at the door, and upon my opening it, two men entered, carrying him upon a hurdle, in a dreadfully mangled condition, his skull fractured, and totally senseless.

"Having spent all his money, he was on his way home, but the evening closing in very dark, and he being as usual intoxicated, he missed his road, and instead of taking the turning which led to the village, followed one which brought him to a stone quarry,

into which he fell. His fall being heard by some of his neighbours who were coming home from their work, they procured a light, and had the humanity to bring him home, in the manner I have described, after which one of them ran to fetch a surgeon, from the next town.

“Although I had no love, but on the contrary a great aversion for my husband; yet seeing him in such a dreadful state shocked and terrified me so much as immediately to bring on labour. I had a tedious and dangerous time, and must have been lost, had it not been for my good mother-in-law, who nursed and attended upon us both: but nothing affects me so much, when I think of it, as the behaviour of that excellent man, my old master, Mr. Smith, whom I had used so vilely. My conduct, whilst his house-keeper, had been so very bad, that he had not thought it right to take any notice of me since I left him; but no sooner did he hear of our distress, than he sent for the surgeon to his own house, and having paid him for the journey he had already taken, desired him to repeat his visits to my husband as often as he thought necessary, promising himself to discharge the bill; nor did a day pass, during either James’s illness or my own, without his sending us, by his servant, some nourishing food. This greatly assisted to recover me, but my poor husband’s intemperance had brought his blood into such a state, that nothing could do him good. He was seized with a fever, which carried him off in a few days. The agonies of his mind and body, and the horror he expressed at the thought of dying, will never be effaced from my memory. The terror they struck into my mind, joined to the impressions which it had begun to receive from my mother-in-law’s pious advice, and the excellent discourses of our minister, made me seriously reflect upon the wickedness of

my past life, and wish to reform ; but this was a difficult and painful task.

“ As one room had contained our whole family, I had been so harrassed and disturbed by the groans of my husband, and the cries of my poor baby, that when the former died, I was so exhausted and ill, that I thought I should have died too ; but it pleased God of his infinite mercy not to snatch me away in the midst of my sins, but to give me time to become sensible of them ; and whilst I have life, I will bless him both for this, and for the sufferings which have been the means of turning my heart from vanity and wickedness, and teaching it to rest with humble resignation upon his mercy, as promised by his beloved son, Jesus Christ, to those who sincerely repent of their sins.”

Here a tear stole down the pale cheek of the penitent Hannah, and she made a short pause, and then proceeded as follows :—

“ Although I at length recovered so far as to go about as usual, I never after the birth of my little Mary enjoyed one moment of health or ease. A violent cough, and pain in my side and chest, came on, attended with a shortness of breath, and a fever which seemed to scorch and dry up my inside. Had not my constitution been naturally strong, I must soon have sunk under this fatal malady : but all was for the best ; and these lengthened sufferings have, united to your pious endeavours, been, under the blessing of heaven, the means of rendering me the altered creature, which I now trust I am.

“ My good mother-in-law, being too old and feeble to work, was supported by the parish, which also made me an allowance for the maintenance of myself and child ; but instead of being thankful for it, I murmured it was not larger, and even dared sometimes to complain of the harshness of Providence, in permitting me to stand in need of it, when I ought

to have reflected, with shame and remorse, on the foolish and wicked actions which had reduced me to such wretchedness. Oh Rachel, mine was a proud and stubborn heart, and required all I have suffered, to humble and soften it !

“ My mother-in-law endeavoured to convince me how wrong it was to encourage this repining spirit, instead of humbly and patiently enduring those misfortunes, of which my own conduct had been the sole cause. What she said had some effect upon my mind ; I became more grateful for the favours I received, and less impatient of the ills I suffered ; but it was reserved for you, my dear Rachel, to finish the good work she began :—to teach me from my heart to detest vice, and love virtue : to wish for a continuance of life, under any circumstances, as affording an opportunity to prove the sincerity of my repentance—yet feel resigned to part with it, whenever it shall please my Almighty Father to demand it from me.”

Here again Hannah was obliged to pause ; and Rachel, whilst tears of mingled joy and grief filled her eyes, tenderly embraced her, but was too much affected to speak. At length the poor invalid proceeded thus :—

“ I have little more to say. I feel my strength diminish rapidly, and must hasten to conclude. About a year after my husband's death, my mother-in-law was attacked by a disorder, which in a few days put an end to her well-spent life. Oh, how different was her death from that of her unhappy son ! She closed her eyes in peace, humbly confident that, through the goodness of God, in accepting her endeavours to obtain his favour, she should open them in joy and glory.

“ I had now lost my only friend, comforter and adviser. My mind sunk under the shock, and my health grew daily worse. My situation was indeed

truly deplorable ; and I had been in it about three months, when hearing accidentally how happy and how much beloved and respected you were, I resolved to go to you. As I might have been equally fortunate, had I been as deserving—and had always treated you in so unsisterly a manner, besides neglecting you so shamefully since we parted, I had little right to obtrude my wretchedness upon you. But I did not then see things in the same light as I now do. Ah, had I sooner done so, what guilt ! What misery should I have escaped !

“ The distance being above thirty miles, although I was three days on the road, the fatigue was more than I could support ; and when I reached your door my whole frame trembled with weakness, and my breath was so completely gone that I could not speak.”

Here poor Hannah ceased ; and Rachel, perceiving that she was much exhausted, prevailed upon her to take some refreshment, after which she assisted her to her room, and left her to repose. After remaining about two hours upon her bed she rang the bell, and when her sister entered, begged her assistance to rise ; saying, her cough would not permit her to sleep, and that she felt in every respect worse. From that day all her bad symptoms continued to increase, until she was obliged to take to her bed, being too weak and ill to sit up. Her sufferings were very great, but she not only bore them with patience, but was thankful to her heavenly Father for the means they afforded of proving her perfect resignation to his will.

One night, about two months after she had finished her melancholy history, she awoke from a short uneasy sleep, with feelings very different from any she had yet experienced, and of such a nature as convinced her that her last hour was fast approaching. She rang her bell, and Rachel entered. Having

thanked her in the warmest manner for all her past kindness, and entreated her forgiveness for all the trouble and sorrow she had occasioned her, she begged to have little Mary brought to her. She kissed her many times; then, turning to her sister, "My dearest Rachel," said she in a faint voice, "you have already assured me, that you will be a mother to my poor child, and I know you will faithfully keep your promise. I know you will teach her to love her Creator, and to dread offending him more than any misfortune which can befall her; and I conjure you, by early impressing her mind with the pure precepts of true religion, guard it against that false one which was so fatal to me. If her heart is filled with the love of her Creator, and a desire to obtain his favour, there will be no room in it for that vanity and love of pleasure which led me astray; and which, joined to the false notions of religion which I learned, have been the cause of those crimes and misfortunes which have brought me to my grave in the prime of my life; when but for them, I might have lived many years happy and respected, looking forward with hope, and backward with satisfaction. When she is old enough, tell her the particulars of my story; and may God, of his infinite mercy, grant that she may take warning by my errors!"

Here, quite overcome by the acuteness of her feelings, poor Hannah sunk back, almost fainting upon her pillow. After a little time she again revived, and begged that a worthy minister of the Gospel, who lived at a short distance, might be requested to come and pray by her. She listened to his suitable and heartfelt prayers with great attention, and when they were ended, she herself offered up a silent but fervent petition to her Almighty Father for mercy and forgiveness.

Soon afterwards she became speechless, but retained her senses, as was evident from the expressive

looks she cast on her sister and child, and the tears which often fell from her uplifted eyes. About four in the morning, these signs of collection began to decrease, and two hours after, she drew her parting breath.

Thus died the once gay and lovely, but vain and guilty Hannah; and, oh! my young readers, let me conjure you, as you would wish to escape her wretched fate, examine your hearts, and if you find in them any inclination to her faults, lose not a moment, but pray to your heavenly Father to grant you his assistance in getting the better of them, now that youth and health are granted to you.

How different was the life! how unlike the death of the worthy Rachel! Having caused her poor sister's remains to be decently interred, she bent her attention to her little niece, for whose good conduct she considered herself answerable to that Being who placed her under her care. She prayed her Creator to bless her endeavours to bring her up in the love and practice of true religion. It pleased him in the abundance of his loving kindness to reward her piety by granting her prayer.

Mary Collins grew up all that her aunt wished her to be. The old pointed her out to the young, as a pattern of modesty, piety, industry, discretion, and every other virtue; and the young loved her for her amiable disposition and cheerful temper. As Rachel advanced in years, and her school became a fatigue to her, she first took Mary as her assistant, and afterwards gave it up to her.

When about thirty years of age, Mary became the wife of an industrious, worthy man, who maintained her in credit and comfort, and assisted in rendering the latter days of Rachel happy. That good woman lived to see the children of her beloved niece imitating the virtues of their parents, and becoming very useful to them. She retained her faculties to

the last ; and at the advanced age of seventy-five, beloved and lamented by all who knew her, she sunk by a gradual and easy decay into the arms of death, who appeared to her not arrayed in terror, but as an angel sent by a gracious God, to remove her from a world of, at best, very imperfect felicity, to one of bliss eternal, increasing and infinite.

“Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord ; for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.”

“May I live the *life* of the righteous, and may my last end be like his!”

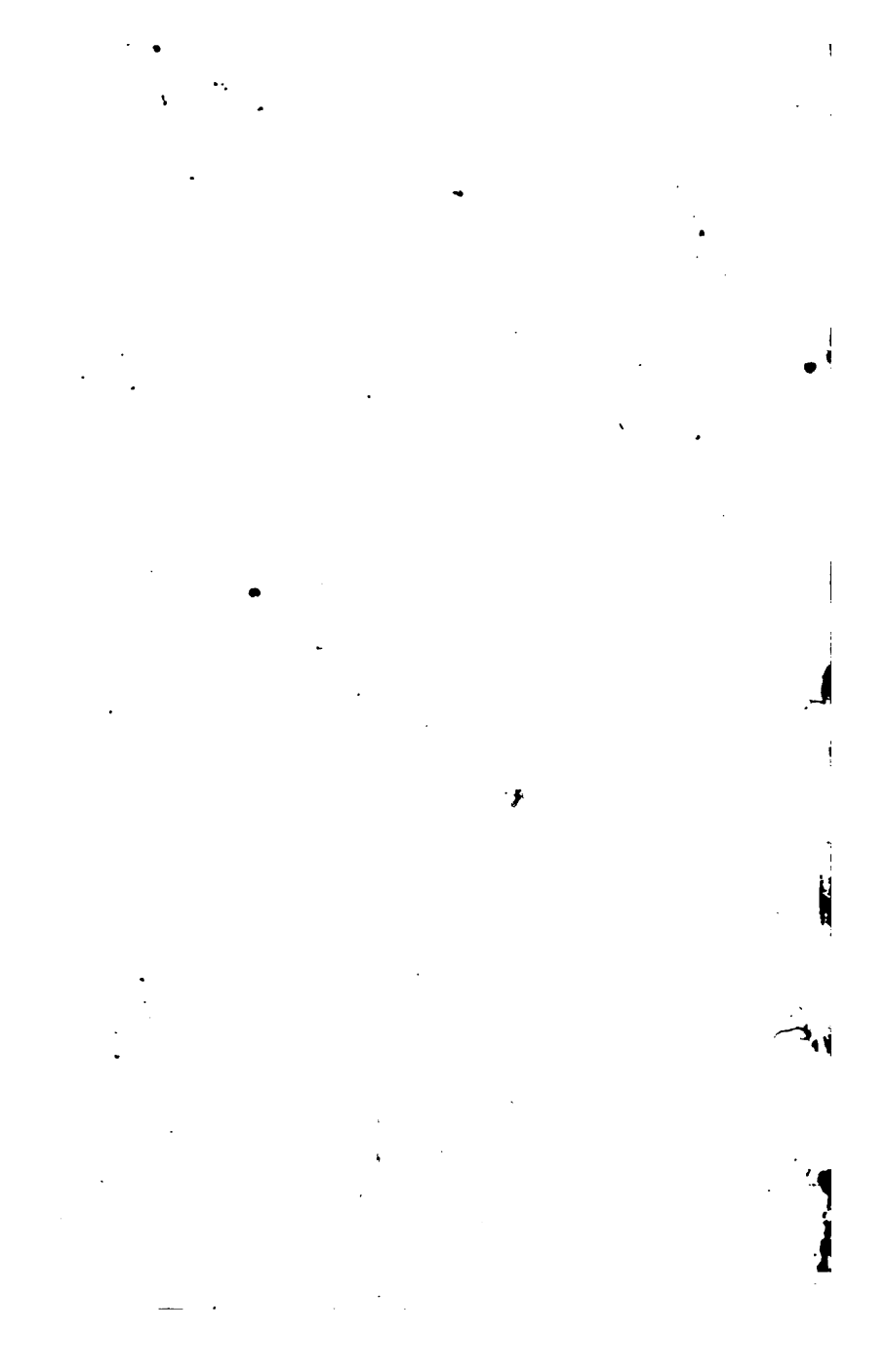
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THE
HISTORY
OF
EDWARD ALLEN,
THE PATIENT MAN.

BY
THE AUTHOR OF "THE OLD SOLDIER."

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THE
HISTORY
OF
EDWARD ALLEN.

RICHARD ALLEN was a day-labourer in one of the northern counties of England; he was honest and industrious, but ill-tempered, and much addicted to drinking. Sarah his wife, was a mild, well-disposed woman; but her constitution was naturally feeble, and the hardships she suffered from rearing a large family, and still more from her husband's unkindness, greatly injured her health. The children were healthy, and none of them had much to distinguish them from others of the same age and rank in life, except the second boy, Edward, who being naturally of a grave thoughtful turn, and less disposed to play than his brothers and sisters, was generally accounted dull. His father in particular was continually reproaching him with stupidity, and saying that he would never do any good. The rest of the family conceived but a moderate opinion of his understanding, although they all loved him, as they had great reason to do; for if any of them wanted assistance, or stood in need of any kind office, no one was so ready to render it as Edward.

His uniform sweetness of temper, and anxiety to oblige, so entirely gained his mother's affection, as in some degree to overcome her habitual dread of her husband; so that although she never opposed him in any thing else, sometimes when he was speaking

harshly to Edward for his supposed stupidity, she would venture to say, "Nay, Richard, don't be cross with the poor boy; if he is not quite so bright as he should be, that is not his fault; and I am sure he is the best tempered fellow in the world."

These little marks of kindness from his mother, contrasted with the moroseness of his father, filled his heart with gratitude, and made him daily more desirous to comfort and assist her. "Do not cry, dear mother," he would often say, when he beheld tears flow down her cheeks, "I shall soon be strong enough to work, and then I will never go to the public-house, but bring all the money I earn to you."

When Richard would return in the evening intoxicated and out of humour, while the other children ran to hide themselves from his presence, and his poor wife feared to approach him, this good boy would place a chair for him by the fire, and endeavour, by every little attention, to bring him into better temper; and when, as was too often the case, his dutiful efforts were returned by abuse and ill usage, he would bear it with the utmost patience, comforting himself with the reflection, that by thus suffering his father to vent his passion on him, he saved his poor sickly mother from being the object of it. Sarah Allen must have possessed a hard heart indeed, could she have helped loving so dutiful a child: but she soon found that, besides his excellent temper and disposition, he was, although less playful and talkative, not less sensible than his brothers and sisters.

In the village where they lived was a school established, at which he regularly attended. To this place the children were sent when of a proper age, and as none of them were deficient in understanding, they all learned tolerably well; but Edward by his attention outstripped the rest, whilst by his orderly behaviour he so much gained the favour of his worthy instructor, that he was rewarded by him with much

kind notice, besides a present of a Bible, and several other books.

Whilst yet very young, he felt an earnest desire to try to gain something to assist his mother; "Were it but sixpence a week," thought he, "even that would be *something*, and though it could not add *much*, it might a *little*, to her comforts." Accordingly, whilst his brother George, who was a year older, was idling away a great part of his time in childish amusements, Edward applied himself diligently to such employments as suited his strength, and it would be difficult to describe the feelings which swelled his affectionate heart, when he presented the first shilling of which he, by this means, became possessed, to his mother, who received it with tears of tenderness and delight. "How often," she exclaimed, "have I called this dear child stupid, because he did not love play; and now, were he as fond of it as George is, where would be the comfort and assistance I receive from him?"

Edward's good conduct, and his progress in learning, at length made even his father think better of him, and treat him with less unkindness. Over his brothers and sisters it gave him a considerable influence, which he endeavoured to turn to their advantage. He was particularly anxious to persuade them to treat their father, whom they could neither love nor respect, with that attention to which, as their father, he conceived him to be entitled. This advice was particularly necessary to Susan, the youngest daughter, who, being a very lively, high-spirited girl, often retorted her father's ill-humour and violence with a degree of pertness which quite shocked her brother. One day when this had been the case in a more than common degree, he began, as soon as his father had quitted the house, to remonstrate with his sister upon her improper behaviour. She excused herself by saying that her father was so ill-tempered, as

to render it impossible to bear with him. "Whatever are his faults," replied Edward, "he is still our father, and as such it is our duty to bear with him. Besides, we ought to do so out of gratitude; for was it not he who maintained us during our helpless infancy—"

"Nay," interrupted Susan, "whatever our duty may be, I think we owe him but little gratitude. How happy both we and our poor mother might be made by the money he daily spends at the public-house!"

"I do not pretend to say," replied Edward, "that he is not to blame in many things. But although he has not done all he could and ought to have done for us, what would have become of us had he done yet less? Think of that, my dear Susan, and see the example which our mother sets us; did you ever hear her speak to my father as you did just now? And what does the indulgence of ill-humour and passion gain you? Does it not provoke him, and render him still more violent, whereas a more gentle and dutiful behaviour could do no harm, and might do much good."

"Why what good has it ever done you?" asked Susan. "I never heard you give him an angry word, and yet I do not see that he treats you much better than he does the rest of us."

"That may be," replied Edward; "but I do not suppose he would be kinder to me, were I to behave differently, so I cannot fare the worse for it. Besides, were I to suffer my temper to be ruffled by every trifle, I should become a torment to myself as well as to every one else."

"But," said Susan, "if my father would only be cross when we have done something wrong, it might be borne; but to scold us for nothing, in the manner he so often does, is intolerable."

"When he is unjust and unreasonable," said Edward, "call to mind the words of Peter: 'What glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye

take it patiently? But if when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.' And instead of murmuring at these trials, rather rejoice that it pleases God to give you such opportunities of showing your patience and meekness. Were every thing to happen just as we wish, were our tempers never to be tried, what opportunities could we find for practising many virtues which are pleasing to our Maker, and showing our resignation to his will?"

These kind remonstrances had a strong effect upon Susan, whose disposition was not a bad one, and who dearly loved her brother. She was aware that the chief cause of her affection for him, was his possessing in so uncommon a degree that mild, patient temper, which he so earnestly wished her to endeavour to acquire. Being fully convinced how much it would be for her present comfort as well as future advantage to do so, she set herself earnestly to imitate his example, and a favourable change was soon visible in her temper and conduct. Sarah, who well knew to whom this improvement in her daughter was owing, grew daily more fond of that son of whose understanding she used to think so meanly, and who was now become the chief support and comfort of her life.

When Edward was fourteen years of age, he hired himself as a farm-servant to Mr. Freeland, a gentleman who cultivated his own estate in the neighbourhood. He now received regular wages, which, as he faithfully kept his promise of never entering an ale-house, and was besides extremely prudent and saving, enabled him to provide his mother with many little comforts which were truly acceptable to her. His sobriety, industry, and good conduct, made him greatly valued by his master; but his education having extended no further than reading, he was without hope of ever rising higher in the world than his pre-

sent station, therefore contented himself with endeavouring to do his duty in it, feeling convinced that, had it not been the fittest for him, his all-wise and bountiful Father who is in heaven would not have placed him in it. Thus humble and contented did he live under the same master for twelve years, during which time he put his two youngest brothers apprentice, one to a blacksmith and the other to a carpenter, besides assisting his mother in so many ways, that at the end of this time he had saved very little money: but this he did not regret; for though he had not saved, he had not misemployed his money, but safely laid it up, "where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where no thieves break through nor steal."

But now an event occurred which had a great influence on his future life. One day, as he was working in a field, on the bank of a river which ran through part of his master's estate, he was alarmed by a loud cry of "Help! help!" He immediately quitted his employment, and hastening to the spot whence the voices proceeded, found a party of boys who had been bathing, and who now stood with every mark of terror and anxiety in their countenances, near the brink of the stream. As soon as Edward appeared, they all begged him to make haste and try to save Charles, (Mr. Freeland's youngest son, a boy eight years old,) who they said had gone out of his depth, and was then under water. Edward, greatly shocked, inquired how long he had been in; to which they replied, scarcely a minute. He immediately plunged into the river, and to his great joy saw him rising to the surface of the water. At the hazard of his life, for he was but an indifferent swimmer, he seized and happily succeeded in conveying him safe to the bank. As he had been so short a time under water, he soon recovered sense and recollection, and finding that Edward had saved his life, expressed towards him

the most affectionate gratitude, embracing him, and exclaiming, "I will never, never forget that you have saved my life at the risk of your own: I wish I was a man, that I might show you how grateful I feel!"

The expression of these natural and worthy feelings was interrupted by Edward's perceiving a quantity of blood trickling down Charles's face. Turning aside the hair which shaded his forehead, he saw a deep cut just above his right temple, which he concluded had been occasioned by his head striking against a sharp stone, whilst under water. Edward blessed God for the narrow escape which his young master had had, and pulling off his own neckcloth, he carefully bound up the wound; and then Charles, being dressed and tolerably recovered, walked home, leaning on the arm of his preserver.

As soon as Charles met his mother, he told her what had happened, begging that she would do something for Edward. While he was speaking, his father entered the room, and having heard the circumstance, desired that Edward, who had modestly gone to pursue his employments, might be called. When he appeared, Mr. Freeland took him by the hand, and cordially shaking it, said, "Edward, I am obliged to you for saving the life of my child; I rejoice that it is to you I am obliged, because it will be a sincere pleasure to me to pay you a part of the debt I owe you. Had you been a drunkard, or idle, or dishonest, all I could do for you would be thrown away; but as you are sober, honest, and industrious, every kindness you receive will be a real benefit to you, and a sincere satisfaction to me."

He then opened a desk, and taking out ten guineas, offered them to Edward, saying, "This is a poor recompence for such a service as you have rendered me; but I will not forget what I still owe you."

"You owe me nothing, my dear master," said Edward, bowing respectfully, but declining to accept the

money; "I have only done what, could I have left it undone, I must have been a monster. I am overpaid, in having been the humble instrument in the hand of God of saving the life of your son."

"You are a truly brave and generous man," said Mr. Freeland, "and I must insist upon your accepting this trifle; not as a recompense to yourself, but as a satisfaction to my own mind." Seeing him still hesitate, he put the money into his son's hand, saying, "Here, Charles, try if you cannot prevail upon Edward to oblige me."

Charles took it, and forcing it into his hand, looked fondly in his face, exclaiming, "Surely you will not refuse me!"

Edward could no longer resist; he took the money, and making a low bow retired silently, with an overflowing heart and tearful eyes. Charles saw no more of him for some days, being confined to his bed by the effects of his accident. The tender attentions of his mother, however, and the application of a very simple remedy, soon removed all its effects, except a deep scar just above his right temple, arising from the cut, which had it been less skilfully treated, might have been attended with dangerous consequences. She first washed the cut with fresh spring-water, then bound upon it a thick slice of raw beef, which she renewed as often as appeared necessary, until the wound was entirely healed. After he recovered, he appeared for some time so unusually thoughtful, that his father at length inquired the reason. "I have been considering, dear papa," replied Charles, "what a pity it is that so good a man as Edward Allen should be nothing but a common servant."

"But, my dear," said Mr. Freeland, "he may be as happy and respectable in that lowly station, as in one more elevated."

"That is true, sir," said Charles; "but I cannot help wishing, notwithstanding, that he could earn

more money." Then, after a pause, in which he appeared lost in thought, he added, "Papa, I have often heard you say, that you are not quite satisfied with Griffis your bailiff: now suppose you were to dismiss him, and put Edward in his place?"

Mr. Freeland smiled at the readiness with which his little boy could devise plans, without stopping to consider the difficulties which opposed their execution.

"But do you not know, my child," said he, "that it is necessary a bailiff should be able to write, and know at least the four first rules of arithmetic, and that Edward is ignorant of these things?"

"Indeed, I did not think of that," said Charles. "But is this your only objection?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Freeland, "I have no other. I have the highest opinion of his understanding, and of his integrity; and were he capable of undertaking the situation, I know not any one to whom I would so gladly give it."

"Well, then," said Charles with great animation, "if his being ignorant of writing and accounts be all your objection, do you not think I could instruct him, when I come home from school, in an evening?"

Mr. Freeland, who loved to encourage this grateful disposition in his son, answered, that if Edward had a desire to learn, and would be content to be taught by so young an instructor, he had no objection to their making the trial. "But do not upon any account, dear Charles," said he, "give him the least hint of our intentions; as I wish to have an opportunity of more strictly watching his conduct, whilst he has no additional motive of interest in regulating it."

Charles promised to observe his father's directions, and hastened to propose his scheme to Edward, who accepted his kind offer with gratitude,

and was so attentive, and his young tutor so diligent, that at the end of two years Mr. Freeland, seeing that he was qualified for the situation, and being by long experience convinced that he merited the good opinion he had of him, made him his bailiff, to the inexpressible delight of Charles. Thus was Edward, or as we shall in future call him, Allen, by his own good conduct and the active gratitude of an amiable boy, raised to a most comfortable and respectable situation, with an income sufficient to supply his own moderate expenses, assist his family, and lay by a trifle every year. He had been in his new office four years, when his happiness suffered considerable abatement from the removal of his young master, between whom and himself a very warm friendship subsisted.

Mrs. Freeland had a brother, a Mr. Tracey, a gentleman of large fortune residing in a distant county, who having no children had adopted William, his oldest nephew, sent him to school, and declared him his intended heir. This gentleman now wrote to his sister, informing her that an opportunity offered of sending Charles to the East Indies, in a manner so advantageous that he could not fail of making a fortune, unless it were his own fault. Mrs. Freeland was grieved at the thought of parting with her amiable son, but the hope of advantage to him induced her to consent. The parting between Charles and his fond parents was a most affecting one. Before he went, he kindly embraced Allen, saying with tears in his eyes, "Heaven bless you, dear Edward! do not forget your little school-master, as you used to call me; and should he return to his country safe and rich, you shall find that he will never forget you."

At that moment Allen forgot all distance between himself and his young master, and folding him in his arms he bedewed his face and hands with his

tears; then falling upon one knee, he fervently prayed the great Father of all to bless and protect him by sea and by land; then again pressing him to his bosom, quitted the house that he might not see him depart.

It is difficult to conceive how much his affectionate heart suffered from the loss of his dear young master; and his spirits soon experienced a still greater shock from the death of his mother. For her he had always felt the strongest affection; and having almost from his infancy made her comfort and happiness his chief study, he felt as if all the interest of his life was gone; and he seemed to want some object upon which to bestow those tender feelings which had hitherto been chiefly directed to her. His brothers and sisters were dispersed abroad, all settled in different ways, far from him. Charles Freeland, whom, next to his mother, he loved more than any one, was yet more distant, and there was no prospect of their meeting again for many years. His father, although he continued to treat him in the most dutiful manner, it was impossible he could love; and though he felt the utmost kindness and good will towards his neighbours and fellow-servants, there was not one among them whose manners, understanding, and conduct, were such as to lead him to choose him as a friend, and to fill up the vacancy which was left by the death of his mother. From his respectable character and situation, many of the neighbouring farmers were desirous of being upon terms of intimacy with him; but although he felt obliged by their attentions, and gratified by their good opinion, he had his master's interest too much at heart to find leisure to cultivate their acquaintance; his intercourse with them was therefore confined to a cordial shake by the hand when they met.

The person with whom he was most intimate was a Mrs. Morris, a widow, who rented a small farm

from Mr. Freeland. She had during several years been that gentleman's housekeeper, and had always treated Allen with great kindness. She had besides been particularly attentive to him during a bad illness, which he had in the second year of his living with her master; having taken care to give him his medicines regularly, and to supply him with every thing necessary to forward his recovery. This conduct had made so deep an impression upon his affectionate heart, that he ever after felt a grateful regard for her, which induced him to do her every kindness in his power, both by advice in her business and by occasional assistance, which he obtained his master's permission to give her. Had she been as good a woman as his mother, she would soon have nearly taken her place in his affections; but she was entirely without piety. If Allen, when he now and then called upon her, spoke, as he was fond of doing, upon religious subjects, she heard him with kindness, but it was plain that she listened because she had an affection for him, not because the subject upon which he spoke was agreeable to her, for she would seize the first opportunity of changing it for one concerning the business of her farm, or the common affairs of the neighbourhood. Allen lamented this, because he had a sincere desire to promote her happiness; but he was forced to satisfy himself with believing that she was what the world calls a very good kind of woman, and hoping that a time would come when that religion, which was to him a source of the sweetest satisfaction, would be the support of her declining years. This however was rather to be wished than hoped for. Few, very few, after youth and manhood have been carelessly, much less wickedly spent, can enjoy in the decline of life that sweet confidence and holy contentment, "that peace which the world can neither give nor take away," and which is a foretaste of that happy state which our

blessed Saviour was divinely commissioned to promise to all who sincerely repent of their sins, who love God, and to the best of their power "keep his commandments."

One morning, when Allen called upon Mrs. Morris, to inquire how she did, having heard that she was unwell, she looked more than usually pleased, and told him that her niece Rebecca Brown, of whom he had often heard her speak in terms of high praise, was come to pay her a visit. "You know," said she, "that she has lived during the last five years with a lady of great fortune, who has a fine house in London, where she spends her winters, and a country seat, where she passes the summer. Her mistress was very unwilling to part with her; but, poor thing! she has been in bad health of late, and so set her heart upon coming to me, that she was obliged to consent to it."

"Will she remain long with you?" inquired Allen.

"The length of her visit," replied Mrs. Morris, "must depend entirely upon her health. Her mistress is so fond of her, that she will, I dare say, want her back again soon; but she must stay till she is quite well."

Soon after, Rebecca entered the room. She was some years older than himself, tall, well made, and handsome. Her manner was sprightly; she talked much; and it was easy to perceive by her aunt's looks, that she thought she appeared to advantage. In vain did he look for any symptoms of that ill health which Mrs. Morris had mentioned as the reason of her visit; she had, on the contrary, every appearance of high health and spirits; but, being perfectly sincere and guileless himself, he was little inclined to suspect falsehood in others; he therefore concluded that she, as is the case with some people, preserved the appearance of health, when she had lost the reality. When he took his leave, Mrs. Mor-

ris followed him to the door, and asked him with a smile, how he liked Rebecca.

"I think her very handsome," replied Allen; "but do not admire her manners, which appear to me too lively and unreserved to be consistent with discretion."

Mrs. Morris looked disappointed; and said, after a short pause, "You must not suppose she is always so gay and talkative. She is, in general, rather too serious, if any thing; but her joy at seeing me after so long an absence has raised her spirits. Poor thing! she always loved me as a second mother."

"I am sure," said Allen in an affectionate tone, "I should be the last to blame her for her high spirits, if that be the cause of them. But do you not think, dear Mrs. Morris, that her dress is finer than becomes her station?"

"Oh," said Mrs. Morris, laughing, "we country folks are bad judges in these matters. It may be too fine for a village like this; but I dare say her mistress would not keep a servant who dressed plainer."

"I think, then," said Allen gravely, "her mistress is much to blame for encouraging a spirit of vanity and extravagance in her servants, instead of persuading them to lay by what would be a comfort to them in sickness or old age."

"Well, well," said Mrs. Morris, "that may be wrong, and I believe it is so; however, the blame rests upon the lady, not on poor Rebecca, who, though she loves neatness, cares as little about finery as you do yourself. I have known her all her life, and I know there is not a better or more prudent young woman in the world; and as for saving, I know she lays by something every year of her life; in a few years more she will have quite a little fortune.—The world," continued she, "is so full of deceit, that there are very few for whose conduct

one can venture to answer; but you, and Rebecca Brown, I think I do know."

Allen, not being aware of any motive which Mrs. Morris could have for wishing to deceive him in respect to her niece's character, believed what she said, and felt a benevolent pleasure in the idea of having been mistaken. Happy had it been for him, had he known her true character and history;—so at least it appears to mortal eyes; but we know that whatever our heavenly Father ordains for us, is in reality most for our advantage; and that those misfortunes which befall us not through our own misconduct, will, if rightly improved, turn out to be blessings, as they all tend to purify our hearts, and exalt them above the transient pains, and still more transient pleasures, of the "world that passeth away." But to proceed.

Rebecca Brown was an orphan. She had five years before gone to live with the lady mentioned by Mrs. Morris, but was soon dismissed for bad behaviour. She had since lived a short time in several places, but gained neither money nor friends: her extravagance constantly depriving her of the former, whilst her bad temper, and carelessness about obliging, prevented her from acquiring the latter. At length, being totally without principle, she yielded to temptations which fell in her way, of committing still greater faults. For some time she was guilty of small acts of dishonesty, without being suspected: but this seldom lasts long; she was detected, and dismissed without a character. In this distress she wrote to beg her aunt to permit her to come to her, a request which Mrs. Morris, being really good-natured, could not refuse. She was, however, too well acquainted with the temper and disposition of her niece, to think of keeping her long; and knowing that her conduct in her last place had deprived her of all chance of obtaining a creditable service, she felt at her first arrival greatly at a loss how to pro-

vide for, or get her off her hands. At length the plan of drawing in Allen to marry her occurred to her mind; and she resolved to do every thing in her power to bring this scheme about, although she had reason to believe a marriage with Rebecca would utterly destroy the happiness of the man for whom she professed so much friendship.

When Allen was gone, Mrs. Morris went to her niece, who was as desirous as herself that the plan should succeed, and, relating to her the conversation which had just passed, begged her to be more upon her guard the next time he visited them. Accordingly when, about a week after, Allen called again, Rebecca appeared in a perfectly plain dress, spoke little, and behaved with such apparent modesty, that he was much pleased with her, and felt convinced that when Mrs. Morris gave her so good a character, she only did her justice.

From this time his visits were more frequent than formerly, and every time he saw her he became more and more prepossessed in her favour. Every thing indeed which he saw and heard, gave him fresh reason to think well of her. As she spoke but little, she avoided the danger of exposing her ignorance. She appeared to listen to all he said, particularly upon religious subjects, with delight; and by repeating exactly his sentiments and opinions, of which artifice he was not at all aware, she induced him to believe, that they thought alike upon all matters of importance. He was likewise fully persuaded that she was an excellent housekeeper, nurse, and manager of a family. Mrs. Morris declared that her niece had quite cured her of the bad complaint she used to have in her stomach, by regulating her diet, and prevailing upon her to give up her glass of rum and water at night; "for," continued she, "Rebecca, like you, thinks all sorts of spirits the most unwhole-

some things in the world, and says they are absolutely slow poison."

When they were drinking coffee in the evening, she would remark how good the rolls were, and added, "I don't know, Rebecca, what I shall do when you leave me, you make every thing so nice. This butter, too, although a week old, is as good as it was the first day: I must learn your method of managing it."

Allen knew that Mrs. Morris had always been remarkable for the goodness of her bread, and the niceness of her butter, but every thing now appeared better and more agreeable than formerly. He suffered his imagination completely to run away with his judgment; he was entirely off his guard at the time of all others in a man's life when caution is most necessary; and though he was possessed of a superior understanding, he suffered himself to be completely deceived.

When she thought her prey quite secured, Rebecca determined, if possible, to bring the affair to an immediate conclusion; for though the scene of her past misconduct was at a great distance, she was in continual fear lest some unexpected accident should bring it to Allen's knowledge; for no distance, either of time or of place, can afford that security and peace to the mind of a guilty person, which the innocent alone can enjoy. Having taken this resolution, the next time Allen called she put on a look of deep dejection; and when he anxiously enquired the cause of the alteration he saw in her countenance, she told him that she had just received a letter from her lady, requesting her immediate return, that she might accompany her to Ireland, whither she was under the necessity of going in less than a fortnight. "This letter," continued she, "has by some unaccountable accident been delayed upon the road more than three weeks, and was this morning delivered to me, toge-

ther with one from the steward, which informs me that my lady having waited to the very last; and finding that I did not return, had been obliged to take another attendant, although very unwilling to part with me."

Allen endeavoured to console her, by observing, that no doubt she could easily obtain another equally comfortable situation: to which she replied, that she could certainly with ease procure one which the world would think quite as good: "but," continued she, "I have lived so long with my late dear lady, and have such a dislike to strangers, and such a habit of attaching myself to those with whom I live, that I cannot bear the thought of a new place, and, as it were, beginning the world again." She spoke these words in a voice so softened by sorrow, at the same time wiping the tears from her eyes, that Allen suddenly resolved to do immediately what he had before more than half determined to do at some future time,—namely, to offer a home in his own comfortable little habitation. The offer was accordingly made, and accepted, and in less than a month afterwards they were married.

Allen believed he had secured his own happiness by this step, as far as human foresight could effect it; and so full was his heart with gratitude to his heavenly Father, for the blessings which he believed he had that day received, that as soon as they returned home from church, he stole from his friends, and shutting himself in his own apartment, returned thanks upon his knees, and fervently prayed that he might become daily less unworthy of it. Having thus relieved his overflowing heart, he returned with a cheerful countenance to the little company which he had invited upon the occasion, consisting of his father, Mrs. Morris, and Mr. Freeland's two principal servants.

Richard Allen, in whom the love of drinking had

increased with his years, expressed much dissatisfaction at seeing that only a cheerful temperate meal was intended to be given, and that no means were supplied for the enjoyment of his favourite pleasure, intoxication. He called for beer, complained that it was not strong enough, and swore that he would be merry that day, though it were to be his last. Allen endeavoured to turn his mind to the pleasure of cheerful and rational conversation; but Richard would not be diverted from his purpose, and again swore that he did not come there to hear preaching, but to be merry; upon which, his son perceiving that he could not change his object without appearing to notice it, as it had been his wish to do, turned to him, and said in a mild tone, "Let us not, my dear father, turn a day of temperate cheerfulness, which ought to fill our hearts with gratitude to the 'Giver of all good gifts,' into one of sin and riot; but let us so pass it, that we may look back upon it with pleasure unmixed with remorse."

Richard muttered that his son was a canting milk-sop, and had better turn methodist preacher; but Allen, far from being irritated by this reproach, only felt grieved that his father should see things in a light so destructive to his present and future happiness. Knowing that argument would but provoke him, he made no answer to his last speech, but again endeavoured to turn the conversation, and by every attention in his power to make him better satisfied with the temperate entertainment of the day. The rest of the company were perfectly content, and appeared so cheerful, that even Richard could not retain his ill humour, but was pleased in spite of himself; and he became still more so, when, at the close of the evening, as the guests were preparing to depart, his worthy son, begging to speak with him, presented him with a very good suit of clothes which he had bought for him. Even his hard heart was for

the moment touched by this instance of dutiful kindness, although it was only one out of many which he was continually receiving from him. He shook him heartily by the hand, saying, "Well, Ned, thou art a good fellow, with all thy odd ways." That night he went to bed sober and in good humour,—a thing which had very seldom happened to him during the last thirty years of his life.

I wish I could say that the worthy subject of this little history found all the comfort he hoped for from his marriage; but from the sketch which I have given of his wife's character and history, and of the artful means she took to obtain his good opinion, the reader will be prepared to hear of the heavy disappointment he experienced. No longer having any object to gain by it, she soon threw off the restraint she had laid upon herself, and appeared, what she really was, idle, vain, extravagant, and ill-tempered; without either good principles, strength of mind, or piety. Had Allen been destitute of this last support, hard indeed would have been the trials his patience had daily to endure; but as religion had heightened every enjoyment, so it now softened all the painful circumstances of his life; and enabled him to sustain them with firmness. To his heavenly Father's will he resigned his whole heart, only praying for strength proportioned to his trials.

Although the attempt seemed almost hopeless, he thought it his duty to endeavour to reform his wife; and had not her heart been completely depraved, he must in some measure have succeeded. He treated her with the utmost kindness, was watchful to supply all her reasonable wishes, bore patiently with her folly and ingratitude, and in spite of constant ill-success, ceased not trying to convince her of her faults, and to urge her to correct them. Although he allowed her every comfort which their income would admit, she was continually teasing him for

better clothes, food, and furniture, than suited either their circumstances, or station in life; and because he steadily, though mildly, refused all her improper requests, she called him covetous and ill natured, and often falsely complained that she might as well have been the wife of a common day-labourer. Although this greatly distressed him, it neither ruffled his temper nor caused him to murmur at his lot. "It is hard," he would say, in the language of our blessed Saviour to Paul, "it is hard to kick against the goads;" and added, "it is also unavailing. By fretting and irritating myself I could not lessen one of my wife's faults, but should add to the unhappiness they cause me a discontented, unthankful heart, which would be a far greater evil; for it would rob me of my only unfailing comfort under them, my confidence in my heavenly Father's goodness: for how could I pray to him for support, whilst I knew I was indulging a spirit displeasing to him? Without this blessing I should be wretched indeed; with it I can say, like holy Paul, 'None of these things move me, neither count I my life (or as I ought to say, my state *in* life,) any thing, so that I may finish my course with joy.'"

Thus supported and strengthened by an approving conscience, and by the blessed influence of piety and resignation to the divine will, did he continue patiently to bear the crosses which were laid upon him by his wife's bad temper and conduct; but now an event occurred which, whilst it filled his heart with joy and gratitude, increased all his trials twofold—I mean the birth of a daughter. The child was lovely and promising; and from the first moment of her entrance upon this state of probation, it became her father's most earnest wish and ardent prayer, that he might be enabled to train her up in a manner worthy of an heir of immortality. He was soon aware that Rebecca was not likely to make a better mother

than she did a wife. Although she professed, and fancied that she felt, a great affection for her child, she was too indolent to make those exertions necessary to its welfare, which was but a secondary consideration with her, when compared with her own ease. As Allen could not be sufficiently at home to attend himself to the management of his little Elizabeth (so named after Mrs. Freeland, at that lady's own request), he resolved, although the expense was almost more than he could afford, to hire a clean, lively, good-tempered girl, who had assisted her mother in nursing a large family, to take care of her until she was able to run about. The child being very strong and healthy, came on so fast under her young nurse's care, that at the end of two years she was able to do without her. Rebecca was very unwilling to undertake the care of her little girl, but Allen was steady in his resolution of parting with the servant now that she was no longer necessary.

With pain he remarked as she grew older, that her mother's treatment of her was in every respect the reverse of what it ought to be; being guided, not by principle, and a desire to make her child virtuous and happy, but by her own unequal temper, according to the dictates of which, she was sometimes unreasonably severe, and at others, caressed, indulged, and flattered her, in a manner equally unfavourable to the growth of every good disposition. In one thing only was her conduct uniformly consistent, and that was in always running counter to her husband. If he praised the child, she never failed to blame her; and if he reproved her, she always took her part. This required all his Christian fortitude to bear. He loved his daughter with the truest affection; to see her therefore in such danger of being ruined by her mother's wrong treatment, filled his mind with anxiety and uneasiness. He knew that the only means by which he could hope to coun-

teract its ill effects, was by gaining an influence over her mind, and impressing it with the love of virtue, strengthened by true religion. It may easily be imagined that such a father must be much dearer to his child than her mother could be; and to this affection, caused by his uniform kindness and gentleness of manner, the steadiness with which he refused her every improper request, and checked every wrong propensity, added a degree of respect and veneration which secured to him the influence he wished to acquire. Never did she find her father unjust, capricious, or severe; neither did she ever receive from him those foolish and pernicious praises of her beauty and understanding, which her mother would, in her occasional fits of fondness, lavish upon her. Yet was he never sparing of commendation when she did right, especially when she gave any proof of self-denial, or conquered her naturally warm temper; but then his praises were of a sort calculated to incite her to further exertion, not tending to make her conceited and fancy herself already perfect.

Earnest and unceasing were his prayers that his efforts might be crowned with success; and he had soon reason to rejoice in the hope that his petition would be granted. Elizabeth's disposition was good, and her understanding strong; she early discerned the difference between the characters of her parents; and as she admired and revered that of her father, she naturally wished and endeavoured to imitate it. Fearing, however, that being much with her mother might have a bad effect upon her mind, and weaken the force of those impressions which he wished to fix deeply on her heart, he placed her as soon as she was old enough a day boarder at a respectable school in the next town. For this purpose he was obliged to relinquish all hope of saving any money for several years to come; but this was a consideration of little weight in comparison to the welfare of his be-

loved child. To this school Elizabeth went early in the morning, and seldom came back before her father was returned home for the evening, when he studied to make the conversation as delightful and as instructive to her as possible. Thus she was scarcely ever alone with her mother; and when her father, whom she so much loved and revered, was present, it was easy to his watchful affection to prevent any bad impression being made on her tender mind.

In this manner had fourteen years passed away, when an event occurred which gave Allen an additional opportunity of exerting the virtues of patience and filial piety. His father having staid, as was his frequent custom, late at the public-house, in returning home one dark night half intoxicated, fell into a gravel-pit which was near to the path that led to his house, and broke his leg. A person who was walking by at the time, ran to inform Allen of what had happened, who immediately hastened to him, and, with the assistance of some neighbours, laid him gently upon a bed placed upon a hurdle, and conveyed him to his own house, from whence he immediately sent for a surgeon. Rebecca, with her usual selfish unfeelingness, said that he ought to have been taken to the Infirmary, which was in the county-town, a few miles distant. Allen answered calmly, though with a look of displeasure, that the Infirmary was intended for the reception of poor people who could not afford to pay for medical assistance.

"Well, and can your father afford it?" asked Rebecca.

"No," replied Allen, "but I can."

"Why surely," exclaimed Rebecca, "you do not mean to take the expense of his cure upon yourself; you who grudge Elizabeth and me common necessities?"

"I grudge you neither necessities nor comforts," replied Allen in the same calm tone, "although I

often restrain in you what appears to me folly and extravagance. Do you see no difference between indulging vanity, which can never be satisfied, and assisting a distressed parent?"

"Well, well," exclaimed Rebecca, "go on assisting him, and wasting your money, till you become a beggar."

"Very few," replied Allen with exemplary patience, "are reduced to beggary by doing their duty; but should that be my lot, I trust I shall be able to bear it with becoming fortitude and resignation."

"This is mighty fine talking," said Rebecca; "but I dare say, with all your fortitude and resignation, you would like as little to die in a workhouse as I should."

"It certainly is not what I wish," replied Allen; "but I could far better endure that, than the consciousness of having neglected my duty to my father."

Rebecca, who knew the inflexibility of her husband's temper in what he believed to be right, muttered something about coming to the parish and quit-
ted the room.

Nothing could exceed the tenderness with which Allen and Elizabeth nursed and attended upon Richard during a confinement of several months; but not all their care, nor the surgeon's skill, could restore the use of the fractured limb; which, although it recovered more than, from his advanced age and habits of intemperance, there was reason to expect, continued so weak, that his lameness, added to the other infirmities of age, rendered it impossible that he should any longer maintain himself. Although Allen well knew the discomfort which having a man of his father's temper and habits to live with him would occasion, he was no sooner convinced of this, than he resolved to take the trouble and expense of his maintenance upon himself. Rebecca, who detest-

ed the old man, was loud in her opposition to this scheme; declaring that the workhouse was the only proper place for such people: but Allen, with as much indignation as his gentle temper was capable of feeling, exclaimed, "Never, whilst I have power to prevent it, shall my father accept of parish assistance. Whilst I have a shilling, he shall have sixpence; and were I sure this loaf would be the last of which I should ever be possessed, he should share it."

Richard was much touched by his son's generous and dutiful conduct, which he knew he had ill deserved; and had it not been for the continual provocation which Rebecca gave him, it is possible his temper might have been softened by it. Such as it was, Allen entreated his daughter to bear with, and pity it; which she, being strengthened by his example, and having entirely subdued her naturally passionate temper, found it easy to do. She was never too busy or too weary to attend upon her grandfather, and bore so kindly and patiently with his ill-humours, that he soon became so fond of her, as scarcely to bear her out of his sight. Yet could not her attentions, nor those of his son, nor the good food and comfortable clothing with which he was regularly supplied, prevent him from often grumbling, because his son would not allow him more liquor than did him good, which he thought a great hardship, although he could not help acknowledging that his health was benefited by his abstinence.

As Allen had foreseen, his discomforts were much increased by the continual quarrels between his father and his wife. As the former had been received into the house against her consent, Rebecca thought herself excused by that circumstance from restraining her temper in the small degree which she had been accustomed to do. There was another thing which was to Allen and his amiable

daughter inexpressibly distressing; Richard's terrible habit of swearing, and taking his Maker's name in vain, continually shocked them. When he first took him, to live with them, Allen, as he had often before done, remonstrated against and strove to reason him out of this foolish and wicked practice; but found that whenever he spoke upon the subject, his father became quite furious, and uttered such oaths and execrations as he could not listen to without horror. He at length resolved to try another method with him. Whenever his father swore or used prophane language, he and his daughter, who exactly followed the directions he gave her, cast their eyes upon the ground with every appearance of that concern and disapprobation which they really felt, and observed a profound silence until he spoke to them in plain words, when they were always ready to answer him with the utmost kindness. This conduct at first enraged him greatly; but they steadily persevered in it; and in a few weeks he swore less frequently than he was accustomed to do, and in a few months had almost left off the practice, except sometimes when provoked by Rebecca. "This alone, my dear child," said Allen frequently to his daughter, "this alone is enough to recompense us for all we have had to bear from my poor father."

About this time the amiable Mrs. Freeland died, and her worthy husband, who felt her loss deeply, had more cause than ever to regret the absence of his son Charles, from whose filial tenderness he would have derived the sweetest consolation; but he was not selfish enough to wish to remove him from a situation so advantageous as that in which he was placed in the East Indies. He had not for some years seen his eldest son, and he now wrote to Mr. Tracy, requesting his permission that he might pay him a visit; which was readily granted.

William Freeland, who, after receiving an expen-

sive education, first at Eton and afterwards at Oxford, had, for the last five or six years, been plunged into all the fashionable dissipation and vices in which the injudicious liberality of his fond uncle enabled him to indulge, thought it a great sacrifice to comply with his father's request, especially at a time when the recent death of his mother must render the house what he called more than commonly dull. His uncle's indulgence, together with the adulation which as his heir had been paid to him, particular by Mr. Tracy's servants, tenants, and neighbours, had rendered him, while yet a youth, proud, selfish, and unfeeling; although, as he afterwards mixed much with the gay, though little with the worthy part of mankind, his manners had acquired an engaging softness and elegance, which, from all but those who intimately knew him, concealed his bad disposition. Mr. Freeland, who, although a truly benevolent and worthy man, possessed little quickness of penetration, was completely deceived by his specious manners, and entertained not a doubt of his being as good and amiable as Charles really was.

As the estate upon which he lived was settled upon his eldest son, and it was not in his power to leave it from him, Mr. Freeland concluded, that as the house was a good one, pleasantly situated, and had, as well as the estate to which it belonged, been long in the family, he would choose to reside in it; and was therefore careful to recommend all his faithful domestics, especially Allen, to his favour. "My health," said he, "declines fast; I shall not probably live long, and I should be sorry any of these good people should have cause to lament my death."

William promised all his father requested. But he had been brought up in a narrow pride and selfishness. He had been taught to consider his inferiors as beings created to contribute to his convenience, profit, or consequence. The idea that it was his

duty to promote, as far as his power extended, their improvement and comfort, had never entered his mind. Mr. Freeland observed the cold distance of his manner towards his dependants with concern; but as he had no doubt of the goodness of his heart, and believed his conduct chiefly arose from their being strangers to him, he hoped that, when he came to live among them, he would by degrees fall into a habit of behaving towards them in a way more likely to ensure their affection, and have a beneficial influence upon their minds.

This hope was strengthened by perceiving that he after a short time treated Allen, who had at first fared like the rest, with great distinction. He often stood to chat with him when they met, and even deigned occasionally to call at his house, under different pretences. Both Mr. Freeland and Allen were far from suspecting that Elizabeth, then a beautiful girl of sixteen, whom he had accidentally seen, was the real cause of a change of behaviour which surprised and gratified each of them. Before he saw her he had often expressed a desire to return to his uncle; and his father was now much and unexpectedly pleased to hear him declare himself willing to remain with him as long as he wished. How would he have been shocked had he known that this change was occasioned by his having formed designs upon the innocent Elizabeth, as disgraceful to himself, as they would have been fatal to her had they succeeded! How long they might have remained secret, had not Rebecca's vanity led the way to their being discovered, cannot easily be guessed. "If I am not much mistaken," said she one day to her husband, when young Freeland had been calling at their house, "Mr. William is in love with our daughter."

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Allen, much alarmed; "I hope not."

"And why so?" asked Rebecca, greatly surprised;

"should you not like to see her married to a gentleman of such fortune and consequence?"

"Indeed I should not," replied Allen. "Even were I sure he intended to marry her, I would endeavour to prevent it. Her education and habits have fitted her so ill for such a high station that, good and sensible as she is, I know it would not add to, but lessen her happiness."

"You have strange notions of happiness, I think," said Rebecca: "to be sure a good fortune, a handsome house, fine clothes, a coach, and footmen, and all that, are dreadful things!"

"I am far from thinking they have power to confer happiness," replied Allen in a firm though gentle tone. "But were I certain they would do so, neither for my daughter nor for myself, as I have often declared, is worldly happiness my principal object. It is to me a matter of comparative indifference, what our lot is here, so we act virtuously."

"And pray what harm," asked Rebecca angrily, "with all your mighty virtue, do you think there would be in letting Elizabeth marry Mr. William Freeland?"

"By so doing," replied Allen, "we should be guilty of the blackest ingratitude to our kind friend and benefactor. With such prospects as his son has before him, our good old master must of course wish and expect him to marry a woman of family, fortune, and education; and how wicked would it be in us to disappoint his hopes, by suffering him to unite himself with our daughter! This alone would determine me never to consent to it, even were I sure that such were his intentions, and that it would promote her happiness in this world. I wish," added he, "for his own sake, that his designs upon her, if he have any, may be of so virtuous a kind; but still more sincerely do I wish that you may be deceived."

Not choosing to argue the point any further with

his wife, Allen, as he spoke the last words, took up his hat and quitted the house, with the determination to watch Mr. William Freeland's behaviour; and, if he saw any thing in it to strengthen his newly raised suspicions, to send Elizabeth from home. He was neither insensible to the risk he ran of making the young gentleman his enemy, or of irritating his wife and father, by this step; nor yet to the loss of comfort which he should sustain in the absence of his beloved daughter: but virtue, not happiness, was his principal object in this world; and he resolved upon all occasions, to the utmost of his power, to secure the attainment of the former, and trust to another state of being for that portion of the latter which should be allotted him by infinite wisdom and goodness.

The next time young Freeland called, Allen saw so much to strengthen his suspicions, which were confirmed by some foolish compliments which Elizabeth with her usual openness repeated, and which had been addressed to her by him one day when they were left for a few minutes alone together, that he resolved immediately to remove her from home. His favourite sister Susan was at that time living in a very good service in a town about forty miles distant. To her he immediately wrote, telling her the reason why he wished his daughter to leave home, and requesting that she would endeavour to procure her a creditable place; adding, that provided it was in a worthy, regular, and pious family, he did not regard wages. In a few days he received an answer from Susan, saying that she did not in the least doubt being soon able to procure her niece a comfortable situation; and in the mean time, as it appeared expedient that she should immediately remove, begged he would send her without delay to the town where she lived, saying that she could board upon reasonable terms with a very worthy

woman, a friend of her own, who lived in an adjoining street.

Allen, who had concealed this plan from his father and his wife, took an opportunity, when the latter was out, of communicating it to his daughter, together with his motives for it. Elizabeth, being convinced that he was in the right, expressed her readiness to go where, or to do whatever he thought proper; although the tears which fell from her eyes as she spoke, proved how much it cost her to part from her beloved father. He embraced her tenderly. "Courage, my child!" said he. "Consider this as one of the many trials to which you will be exposed during your journey through life; and by keeping its glorious end in view, arm yourself with fortitude to bear it as becomes an heir of immortality."

Elizabeth pressed his hand to her lips, but could not speak; and Allen was obliged to turn away his head, to conceal the tears which forced their way down his cheeks. After a pause of some length, he begged her not to mention what was intended, either to her mother or grandfather, as he wished to avoid altercations. He then desired her to pack up what clothes she wished to take with her, and said he would that evening convey them to the next town, where he was going upon his master's business, and that he would conduct her there himself the following Friday, which day Rebecca was to pass with an acquaintance three miles distant. From thence he proposed that she should the following morning set out in the coach for the town in which her aunt lived, where, it being the middle of summer, she would arrive before night. The clothes were accordingly sent without Richard's or Rebecca's knowledge; and upon Friday morning, the latter, dressed in all her best, set out early, to spend the day with her acquaintance. Allen had before prepared a letter which he requested his father to give her when she return-

ed, explaining his reasons for sending Elizabeth away, and informing them that it was his resolution she should remain absent as long as Mr. William Freeland continued with his father. Elizabeth put the house in exact order; and then Allen told his father that he should take her out with him a few miles, and should not return before the next morning; which piece of intelligence he heard without concern, as he had no suspicion that he meant to leave her behind him. They accordingly dined peaceably together, and in the cool of the evening, having kissed her grandfather, with tears in her eyes she quitted the house together with her father. They had a pleasant walk to the neighbouring town, where having spent the evening in comforting and advising his daughter, Allen went to rest; and rising early the next morning, took a tender leave of her, saw her safe in the coach, and then returned home, arming himself with patience to bear the reproaches which would he knew be poured upon him by his wife and father.

No sooner did he enter his own door, than Rebecca assaulted him with the most unbounded violence, calling him a thief and a kidnapper; bidding him restore her child, and vowing that she would never cease to torment him till he brought her home. Allen at first endeavoured to soothe her, by assuring her that their beloved daughter was safe and well, and that as soon as he could do it without endangering her peace and safety he would fetch her back. But the more he tried to pacify his wife, the more violent she became; she cried, stamped, fell into fits, and gave way to every extravagance which passion could dictate; until, finding that her husband remained unmoved, she suddenly recovered, dried her eyes, and in an altered tone asked him if he had considered what Mr. William Freeland would think of the affair, and whether he intended utterly to ruin his

family? Allen supported himself with the consciousness of having done what he believed to be his duty, and the certainty that, let what would be the consequence, he could never repent. He told his wife that his mind was prepared for any misfortune which might befall him in consequence of his having, as he believed, acted right; and with more than usual firmness of tone and manner bade her be assured, that neither her clamour, nor the fear of seeing his family reduced to poverty, should ever have power to turn his feet aside from the known path of duty. Richard then declared that by taking away his granddaughter he had robbed him of the only pleasure which remained to him in life.

"My dearest father," replied Allen, "we should always, as far as we have the means, remove the young and inexperienced out of the way of temptation, as well as instruct them how to withstand it. The strongest cannot always answer for their powers of resistance; and shall we expose the weak, the tender, those who depend upon us for support and protection, to the unequal combat? Could you bear to see your darling robbed of her innocence, disgraced, and rendered one of the vile of the earth? Think what would then be our misery, conscious as we must be, that by exerting timely caution this dreadful evil might have been prevented! O my dear father, pain, disappointment, poverty, I could bear; but such a consciousness I could not, I never will endure!" So saying, he quitted the house to pursue his usual avocations.

Richard, for a moment, felt affected and convinced; and even Rebecca was silenced, only muttering, in a low tone, that it was in vain to contend with her husband, since, right or wrong, he would always have his own way.

Poor Allen's heart was oppressed; he wanted some faithful friend, such as his wife ought to have

been, to whom he might communicate his feelings; but his dear Elizabeth was far away, and there was no other person to whom he chose to discover his domestic uneasiness. Yet though harassed and anxious, he possessed consolations with which the offer of a world would not have tempted him to part, in the humble and thankful consciousness that he partook of the blessing pronounced upon "those who suffer for righteousness' sake."

A few days after Elizabeth's departure, Mr. William Freeland called in Allen's absence at his house, and, inquiring for her, was informed by Rebecca of what had happened. The irritation of her own feelings completely threw her off her guard, and she, with a degree of imprudence equal to her want of principle, hinted in pretty plain terms what were her husband's reasons for resolving upon this measure; at the same time vehemently disclaiming all share in, or previous knowledge of, the transaction. The haughty young man, although conscious what were really his designs, was highly offended at their being suspected; and Allen entering at the same instant, he complained bitterly to him of his wife's insolence, adding, "Both she and you have shown a strange degree of presumption, in imagining that I would throw away a thought upon a girl so much my inferior, and may have cause to repent having presumed so shamefully upon the too great condescension with which I have treated you."

Allen did not attempt to deny having suspected his young master of an improper partiality for his daughter; but humbly begged his pardon, if he had done so without cause. Young Freeland, rather provoked than appeased by this apology, quitted the house in high wrath; nor did he ever after treat him but with the utmost haughtiness, and to Rebecca he deigned not even to speak.

Poor Allen's patience was now put to a still fur-

ther test, by the increasing ill-humour of his father, who hourly missed the attentions of his grand-daughter; and by the teasing temper of his wife, who ceased not to reproach him with having both spoiled Elizabeth's fortune, and robbed them of the young squire's favour; although it is probable this last misfortune would not have befallen them, had she restrained her own petulance, and simply answered his inquiries, by saying that she was gone to service.

In vain did Allen represent to her, that whilst he continued to discharge faithfully his duty towards Mr. Freeland, it was very improbable that his son should carry his resentment in future so far as really to injure them; and beg of her to consider, even were he to do so, of how little value were any benefits he could confer or withhold, when compared with the displeasure or favour of their heavenly Father; all he could say only rendered her more violent. He hoped that when young Freeland returned to his uncle, which he heard he was to do the following month, he should, by sending for his daughter, restore his family to some degree of tranquillity and comfort: but in this hope he was disappointed by the sudden death of Mr. Tracy, which fixed the young gentleman's residence with his father.

Mr. Tracy left his fortune to his brother-in-law for his life, after which he bequeathed his landed property to his elder nephew, with a handsome legacy in money to the younger. Their good father wished a larger portion had devolved upon Charles; as the estate upon which he resided being, as before mentioned, settled upon William, his fortune would be very much the largest. As this, however, could not be altered, he endeavoured more than ever to infuse a liberal spirit into William's mind, and to inspire him with a wish to make a worthy use of the riches, of which, from the declining state of his own health, he believed he would soon be possessed. The

young man listened with apparent attention to his advice, which made him hope it would influence his conduct; and mistaking some actions, whose true motive was ostentation, for proofs of a generous, humane disposition, he hoped no one would be a loser by his death.

Owing probably to his active temperate habits and mild evenness of temper, his life was, contrary to his own expectations, preserved for nearly four years, in the second of which an event of consequence took place in Allen's family—I mean the death of his father; an event which, from the time he became an inmate in it, he had taken unwearied pains to prepare him for, by weaning him from all his bad habits, and fixing in their places a sincere sorrow for his past offences, a hatred of sin, a love of goodness, a lively belief in the promises, with a humble though confident dependance upon the mercies of Almighty God through his beloved son our Saviour Jesus Christ. These pious endeavours had in some degree succeeded, though not so completely as he ardently wished. It is a difficult task to lead the mind of old age into an "unbeaten track," and to teach one to do good who has been long accustomed to do evil.

This event was in rather more than a year succeeded by one of a more cheerful kind, namely, the marriage of Elizabeth. Allen received a letter from his sister, informing him that his daughter, who was remarked by all who knew her for her prudence, modesty, and general good conduct, had received an offer of marriage from a man of excellent character, who was rich, and engaged in a respectable line of business. She added that she had used all her influence with her niece to persuade her to accept it; which, if he approved, she resolved to do. She added an earnest request from her, that he and her mother would be present at the marriage.

When Allen informed his wife of these circum-

stances, she was wild with joy; not occasioned by the hope of soon seeing her daughter again, but by that of her being married to a rich man, and of herself partaking of the plenty and gaiety which she concluded would of course reign in her house. Having obtained more money from her husband than he had ever before given her at one time, for the purposes of vanity, she immediately laid it all out in finery, as she would have done twice as much, had she possessed it; and waited with childish impatience for the time when they were to begin their journey. At length it arrived; and Allen having obtained leave of absence for a week from his master, conducted his wife, according to his sister's directions, to the house where Elizabeth boarded before she obtained a service. There they were met by her, and again and again did she embrace them in the tenderest transports of filial love.

Allen was extremely anxious to see his intended son-in-law, being somewhat afraid, from his sister's having said in her letter that she used all her influence with her niece to persuade her to accept of him, that her doing so was rather from motives of interest than liking. In the evening Mr. Barlowe, the intended husband of Elizabeth visited them, accompanied by Allen's sister, who presented him to the parents of his future wife. Allen was rather surprised to perceive that he did not appear to be more than a few years younger than himself; he was, however, remarkably well-looking, and very sensible and respectable in his conversation and manner. He gave him proofs that his circumstances were good; and as Elizabeth seemed upon the whole well satisfied with her prospect as his wife, he concluded that, with the blessing of Heaven, it was probable she might be as safe, and in all respects, perhaps, more happy, in a marriage of prudence and gratitude, than in one of stronger affection.

Rebecca enjoyed the good and plentiful dinner which her son-in-law provided upon his wedding-day, the handsome clothes in which her daughter was dressed, and the convenient house and good furniture of which she saw her become the mistress; and Allen, although distressed by her excessive gaiety, and the many absurd things she said and did, was pleased to observe that Mr. Barlowe appeared to be a man of cool and determined character; for he not only repressed by his own gravity her foolish mirth, but firmly and decidedly put an end to several proposals of a pleasurable and expensive kind, which she absurdly made. Once or twice he thought that, although right in principle, Mr. Barlowe was rather too grave and peremptory in his behaviour to the mother of his bride upon his wedding-day: however, as he regularly treated Elizabeth with the greatest kindness and attention, he satisfied himself with the belief that she was placed in safe hands, where she would be protected from every danger, and secured from every want; and as he trusted that she would never behave in a way resembling that of her mother, he hoped her husband would never think it necessary to treat her in a similar manner.

Upon the second day after the wedding, Allen, notwithstanding his daughter's pressing intreaties that he would stay longer, determined to return home, and take his wife with him, though she greatly wished to be left behind. He very plainly perceived that Mr. Barlowe wished to have his house to himself. He behaved towards him with such a degree of respect, as savoured more of ceremony than of friendship; and when, as he was taking leave, his daughter anxiously enquired when she should see him again, he interrupted his reply by saying, "My dear Elizabeth will now have the management of her own house to attend to; and as the duty of man and wife must be equally binding to each other, she will

remember that she must 'leave father and mother, and cleave to her husband.'"

Elizabeth answered only by a tear which she strove to conceal; and Allen, attributing his desire that they should leave him chiefly to Rebecca's ridiculous behaviour, cordially shook hands with him, and, fervently wishing that the virtue and happiness of both of them might daily improve, pressed his beloved child to his bosom in a tender and lengthened embrace, and departed.

Soon after his return home he received a letter from Elizabeth, informing him of the sudden death of his sister Susan, and shortly after, Rebecca's aunt, Mrs. Morris, also died. She had for some years been upon ill terms with her niece, and she left all she was worth to a relation who lived in a distant part of the kingdom.

Having now neither his father nor daughter to provide for, Allen had nothing so much at heart as the desire to improve the temper and disposition of his wife, and to impress upon her heart the great importance of living here in such a manner as might afford a well-grounded hope of a happy immortality; in comparison of which, all the riches, the greatness, and the pleasures of this world, are but as dust in the balance. Sometimes he flattered himself that he had made some progress in this difficult, and seemingly almost hopeless undertaking. When he read, as was his constant practice every evening, some portion of the Holy Scriptures, he sometimes thought she appeared to listen more attentively than she used some years before; she behaved with more decency when he prayed, having left off that most improper and unfeeling habit of yawning, and sometimes even sleeping, whilst he was performing this sacred and solemn office. He even sometimes felt hopes that she was less violent, vain, and selfish, than she used to be: but when any thing occurred

which called forth her natural disposition, he was but too well convinced that the improvement in her temper arose more from having little to irritate it, and that her appearing less vain and giddy was more owing to her spirits being less high than formerly, than to any material change in her heart.

Allen received frequent letters from his daughter, filled with expressions of the warmest affection and gratitude; but seldom mentioning her husband, further than saying that he was well. This rendered him uneasy, as he could not help fearing that he was less kind to her than her excellent temper and disposition gave her a right to expect. Although extremely unwilling to interfere between persons so nearly connected, he could not make himself easy without inquiring, not the particulars of her husband's conduct and way of life, but whether she was upon the whole satisfied with it. He soon received an answer from Elizabeth, in which, after expressing the tenderest gratitude for the deep concern he felt for her happiness, she proceeded in the following words:

“What cause have I, my dearest father, to thank and bless you for the pains you took to teach me to be gentle and patient! Were I such as without your example and instruction I should have been, how wretched would be my present situation, which, thanks to them, I find upon the whole very comfortable. Mr. Barlowe is in many respects a good man, and takes care to provide me with all the comforts of life, and some of its luxuries, which never having been accustomed to, I could do very well without; but his temper is so violent and arbitrary, that were I ever to oppose him, there would be an end of all comfort. There is much to be said in his excuse. He was an only child; his mother died whilst he was an infant, and he was not blessed with such a father as mine, but had one who indulged him in every thing, and taught him on all occasions to consider

his own gratification in the first place. He is, as you know, more than double my age, so has been long used to his own way; besides which, knowing how much my station in life has been raised by my marriage, he expects me, in return, to give up to him in every thing. This you will say is ungenerous, and so it certainly is; and had I foreseen it, I should undoubtedly have preferred remaining in my comfortable service, where I was so much valued, to becoming his wife. But, as you have often told me, my dearest father, it is in vain to lament an evil which was not occasioned by any fault of my own, and which cannot be remedied; and I should be most ungrateful to Providence, were I to complain of this one unpleasant circumstance, when it is the only one I have to balance against so many blessings."

Allen read this letter with a mixture of joy and sorrow; but the former feeling was the strongest, and was mingled with devout gratitude to Heaven for the additional proof which it afforded, that his endeavours to fix in his daughter's mind a pious, resigned, and patient disposition, had been crowned with success.

Not long after the receipt of this letter, Mr. Freeland died, lamented by all who knew him, but by none more sincerely than his worthy bailiff. The tears which he shed to his memory were those of gratitude and affection, unmixed with any selfish feeling; for, as he had always faithfully discharged the trust reposed in him, and knew that his good old master had often recommended him to his son's favour and protection, all apprehension that his situation would be altered by his death had long since passed from his mind. He was, however, deceived; for only a few weeks after the funeral, he received his discharge from Mr. Freeland, with notice to quit his habitation at a stated time.

Allen bore this change of fortune with his usual

gentle firmness; but Rebecca was overwhelmed with grief, and bitterly reproached him with having by his ridiculous scruples (so she called his dread of committing a wrong action) been the cause of all their misfortunes. "Did I not tell you," said she, weeping violently, "how it would be? But you would have it so."

He endeavoured to calm her, by representing that they might meet with another situation as comfortable as that they were about to quit. "However, be that as it may," added he, "I can never repent what I have done, when I reflect how small is our loss in forfeiting the favour of an earthly master, whose power to confer happiness is so limited, compared to our gain in winning that of Him, whose power is only equalled by his goodness."

He then proceeded to tell her, that as he thought it would be more for their comfort to leave the neighbourhood of Mr. Freeland, he would that day go to Mr. Harvey, an intimate friend of his late master's, who lived a few miles off, and beg him either to give or to procure him employment. Rebecca was somewhat appeased by the hope which this scheme held out; she hurried his departure, entreating him to hasten back, as she should be miserable until she knew how he had succeeded.

Mr. Harvey received him with great kindness; but was much surprised when he informed him of his dismissal, for he knew the peculiar regard which his late friend had always entertained for him. He begged him to explain the reasons which had induced Mr. Freeland to discharge him; which he, who disliked nothing more than either praising himself or speaking ill of any one, would gladly have declined, could he have done so without giving Mr. Harvey an ill opinion of him. That gentleman listened attentively to his brief and simple narrative; then shaking him cordially by the hand said, "You are a

worthy man, and I will do all in my power for you; I would willingly place you in the same situation in my family as you held in that of my late esteemed friend, could I do so consistently with justice to my present bailiff, with whom I have every reason to be satisfied. However, come to me again in a fortnight: by that time I shall, I hope, have employment for you, in some alterations which I am going to make in my grounds, until I can hear of some situation which will suit you better. But," added he, "if I should not be able immediately to set you to work, it will not, I trust, be any serious inconvenience, to you, as so prudent and so industrious. a man as you have always been, must doubtless have saved money?"

"A trifle, sir," replied Allen; "my savings will not maintain us very long."

He could easily have accounted for this, had he chosen to mention his wife's extravagance and bad management, and his kindness to his relation; but he loved neither to praise himself nor to speak ill of others.

Almost before he could enter the house, on his return home, Rebecca asked him "What news?" "Good news," replied he in a cheerful voice; "news which ought to fill our hearts with gratitude." He then related what had passed. "And is this all!" exclaimed Rebecca, with a look of disappointment. "Is this all the mighty news!—that you are to become a common day-labourer?"

"We were neither of us born in any higher station," replied Allen. "Let us consider the last twenty years of our lives as a long visit, during which we have been daily seated at a plentiful table, and enjoyed many undeserved favours; and since it is the will of him who conferred them, that we should now depart and return to our original obscure station, let us do so with thankful and contented hearts."

"Contented!" said Rebecca: "to be sure I may as well be contented, since I cannot help myself; yet it is very hard to be so reduced," added she, bursting into tears. Allen looked at her with the kindest compassion, and said in a gentle voice, "What would I not give that I could persuade you think as lightly of these transient afflictions as I do! Why," added he more cheerfully, "why are you thus troubled about many things, when but *one* thing is needful, and that *one* thing it is not in the power of the whole world to rob us of!" These words, and the kind manner in which they were spoken, had some effect upon Rebecca, although they were far from making her properly resigned to her change of condition.

At the appointed time, having sold their furniture, they removed to the village where Mr. Harvey lived, and settled themselves in lodgings at the house of a poor widow of respectable character, to whom the moderate weekly sum they agreed to pay her was very acceptable. Mr. Harvey immediately furnished Allen with employment, and he set about it with alacrity and cheerfulness. No one who had seen this good man, at that time, would have imagined that any change had taken place in his circumstances. His dress had never been more than decent, and such it still continued to be; and the same cheerful serenity appeared in his countenance as formerly. But the case was far different with his unhappy wife. Instead of endeavouring, by keeping herself and their apartments clean and neat, by industry and good management, and by behaving in a kind and obliging manner, to render her excellent husband's life comfortable, she spent the greatest part of her time, either in gossiping with such of her neighbours as were as idle and worthless as herself, or in sitting with her elbows upon a table, weeping, and calling herself the most unfortunate of women.

The evening after their arrival at their new habitation, Allen wrote a long letter to his daughter, giving her an account of all that had befallen them, and entreating her not to make herself uneasy about him: "for," added he, "my happiness does not depend upon the will of any fellow-creature; it rests upon a foundation which it is in no one's power but my own to shake."

In a few days an answer arrived from Elizabeth, beginning thus:—"It would be in vain, my dear and honoured father, for me to attempt to describe what I felt on reading your letter. Till then I thought myself sufficiently happy; but I am now far otherwise. No sooner had I finished your affecting narrative, than I ran to show it to my husband. He read it without expressing the least concern; then coolly asked me, what I expected him to do? I was greatly shocked; for though I knew him to be too fond of money, too desirous of heaping up useless riches, I never doubted but he would have enabled me to assist you. I was so much surprised at his question, and the way in which he asked it, that I could not speak. After a moment's pause, he added in the same tone, 'If I support you and your children in credit and comfort, that is all you have a right to expect from me; I will continue to take care of you and them, and your father must maintain himself and his wife, as he is very well able to do.' So saying, he would have left me; but I caught hold of his arm and was going to speak, when he shook me off; and looking at me with a sternness which made me tremble, 'Elizabeth,' said he very angrily, 'I have married you, and I will do my duty by you, but I have not married any of your relations; they have not, not ever can have, any claim upon me.' With these words he quitted the room.

"What a change have these few words made in my feelings! How happy was I an hour ago—how unhappy am I now! I had hoped to have been able

to send my dear parents something worth their acceptance; instead of which, this poor ten-pound note is all I have to offer. He gave it me a week ago, to purchase things which I do not want. Accept it, my beloved parents, accept it from your Elizabeth, who wishes it were in her power to send one of twenty times its value. Do not fear my suffering and discomfort from sending you this trifle; I am almost certain that my husband will not trouble himself to inquire what I have done with it. If he should, I will tell him the truth, and can bear his reproaches, should he have the heart to utter any." The rest of her letter consisted of affectionate prayers for their welfare, and fruitless wishes that it were in her power to render their situation as comfortable as she wished it to be. Allen was much affected by this letter, but hesitated not a moment in resolving to return the note. His wife was from home when it arrived, and he hastened to write before her return. He intreated his daughter not to make herself unhappy, nor blame her husband for refusing to assist them. "While I have health," added he, "I want not, nor would I accept of charity from any one: but even should I in future stand in need of it, do not, as you value my blessing, again attempt to relieve me, without his knowledge and approbation. I would rather suffer any degree of distress, than be the cause of strife between you; and still more of your doing an action, even from a commendable motive, which you would wish concealed from him."

At dinner-time Rebecca returned; and Allen, thinking it right to acquaint her with Elizabeth's kindness, read her the letter he had received, at the same time telling her what he had done. Rebecca was extremely angry, and complained that, not satisfied with reducing her to poverty, he now refused to permit her daughter to assist them. "And would you then wish her to assist us, when to do so she must

either run the risk of offending, or resolve to deceive her husband?" asked Allen with a look of indignation.

Rebecca would have cared very little what she risked, but was ashamed to say so, therefore preserved a sullen silence. All her ingratitude and want of principle, however, could not discourage him from doing his duty with unwearied perseverance. Had his wife been good tempered, and a good manager, they might have been very comfortable, but this became every day less the case. She grew more and more idle, dirty, and ill-tempered, until continual fretting and irritation undermined her health. Her appetite failed, sleep forsook her, and a low nervous fever took possession of her emaciated frame.

Although she had been the bane of his comfort for more than twenty years, Allen sincerely wished her life to be prolonged, in the hope that she might at length be led to repentance and amendment. He shuddered at the thought of her being removed from this world, whilst in her present sinful state. He sent for the village apothecary, who gave her medicines; but all to no purpose. Believing that there was little likelihood of her recovery, in which belief he was confirmed by the apothecary, he felt more than ever anxious to turn her mind if possible to those subjects which engaged so large a portion of his own. One evening on his return from work, he found her seated with her elbows upon the table, leaning her aching head upon her hands; and, inquiring how she felt, was peevishly answered, "Worse than ever." In the kindest manner he expressed his concern at seeing her so ill, and asked if he should read a little out of the Bible to amuse her.

"No, no," replied she; "I am tired of hearing nothing but the Bible, and my spirits are too low to bear any thing so dull and melancholy."

"Ah, Rebecca!" exclaimed Allen, "do you call

that blessed volume of heavenly instruction and consolation dull and melancholy? Did you know how it has supported and comforted me under all my afflictions, how light it has made them appear, you would anxiously desire to become better acquainted with its contents, and to taste that comfort which it offers to those who truly repent of their sins."

"It is too late to try to like it now," said Rebecca peevishly; "and I know it would only make me still more low-spirited."

"It is never too late, my dear Rebecca," said Allen, "to seek instruction, and to turn our minds to heaven and heavenly things. Happy are they who have early done so, whilst death appeared far distant; but it can never be too late to repent sincerely of our sins, and endeavour to prepare for our departure, by purifying our hearts, and rooting out from them those faults of disposition and temper, which, like so many bitter enemies, have placed themselves between us and the kingdom of Heaven."

"But why do you say this to me?" asked Rebecca in a tone of horror; "you do not think I am dying, do you?"

"It is impossible for me to judge," replied Allen, "what may be the designs of our heavenly Father concerning you. Perhaps he only sends this illness in mercy, as a means of turning your heart to him; but whether it be his pleasure to grant you lengthened life, or soon to bring it to a close, it is equally your interest, as well as duty, to spend the remainder of it in endeavouring to atone for the past; and so prepare for that awful change which awaits us all."

"You terrify me," exclaimed Rebecca; "do tell me, has the doctor said that I shall die?"

"I will not deceive you," replied Allen. "He this morning told me that he had very little hope of your recovery."

Rebecca wrung her hands in an agony, exclaim-

ing, "Then I am lost, undone—miserable wretch that I am! Yet," added she, "all hope is not gone, I may still recover." Her agitation of mind became so violent that she could not speak. Allen endeavoured to soothe and compose her spirits, by speaking of the great mercies of God towards penitent sinners, promised by our Saviour Jesus Christ. He tried, as he had often done before, to explain to her the nature of true repentance; namely, a deep sorrow for, and sincere hatred of sin, with an upright amendment of the mind and life. He was anxious to seize every opportunity of trying if possible to awaken her feelings, convince her understanding, and touch her heart: but while a hope of life remained, she was seldom disposed to listen to him. At length the apothecary, after an attendance of several weeks, told her that he could do her no good, and that all chance of recovery was at an end.

Although this was no more than she had long had reason to expect, it overwhelmed her with despair. Vainly did she look round her for comfort; there was nothing past, present, or to come, that did not increase her anguish. Hoping to find some relief from this wretched state, she at length consented to listen to Allen, whilst he read to her such portions of Scripture as he thought best suited to her case. But far, alas! was she from finding there the consolation she had hoped for. The dreadful denunciations against those who persist in a life of wickedness, which are mingled continually with the promises of mercy held out to those who feel that true repentance which she did not feel, struck her with terror.

Allen wished to console, but feared to deceive her with false hopes; for he knew that the same God, who hath declared himself "the Lord God gracious and merciful, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiv-

ing iniquity, transgression and sin," has also declared that "he will by no means clear the guilty;" and proclaimed by his beloved Son, that at the last awful day of accounts, every one will "receive according to his deeds."

Impressed with this conviction, he could only entreat her to have recourse to prayer, as a means of calming her spirits, and obtaining that frame of mind which alone could give her a just hope of becoming an object of divine mercy. "Oh, I cannot, I dare not pray!" exclaimed the wretched woman. "How can I hope that God will hearken to me, when I have passed my life in thoughtless folly, vanity, and wickedness; shutting my heart against all that is good? Fool that I was! I thought it would be time enough to repent and make my peace with God, when I was going to die. I now feel how hard it is to repent, how fatally I have been deceived. Miserable wretch that I am, what will become of me!"

Her agitation became so violent, that Allen feared it would have terminated her life. He raised, supported, and tenderly soothed her, until she became more tranquil; then kneeling beside her bed, he offered up a fervent prayer to God, beseeching him to soften her heart, to give her a deep sense of her sins, and a lively faith in the gracious promises he had made to the truly penitent by Jesus Christ. She was much affected, and fixing her eyes upon him said in a tremulous voice, "Continue to pray for me. Pray that I may be enabled to wean my heart from this vain world. But, alas! on what can it rest? I cannot, like you, fix it with humble confidence and joy upon another."

Allen could only repeat what he had already said, of the goodness of God, and of his loving mercy, as declared by Jesus Christ, to the truly penitent; and again entreat her to pray to him for that change of

heart and affections, which would in some degree fit her to become an object of his mercy.

Believing that a few days must put an end to her life, Allen wrote a letter to his daughter, informing her of her mother's situation. She was so much affected by it, that, had she been able to have gone to her, she would not easily have been prevented: but the birth of an infant, which happened only two days before, rendered this impossible. The letter, which was incautiously put into her hands by the nurse, nearly cost her her life; and was the occasion of an illness from which she did not recover for many weeks.

In the mean time Rebecca grew daily weaker and worse; and soon became so helpless, that Allen feared to leave her alone, for even a short time. He wished to have paid the woman of the house for attending upon her, while he was absent at work; but the poor invalid, as had been the custom of her life, considering only her own gratification, entreated him to remain himself with her; a request which, in her present circumstances, he could not prevail upon himself to refuse; and was the more willing to grant, from the hope of being more likely to succeed, at least in some degree, in his grand object,—that of fixing her mind upon the means of obtaining the grace and mercy of which she stood so much in need.

Nothing could exceed the tenderness with which he watched over her night and day, never quitting her, but to take that portion of rest which was absolutely necessary to keep him from falling ill. She appeared to become more sensible of his kindness, as her illness increased. It was now the depth of winter, and the cold was unusually severe. Seeing him one night pull off his coat, and spread it over her benumbed limbs, a sudden feeling of gratitude warmed her heart; and taking his hand, "Edward," said she, "I ill deserve this kindness from you. I

have been a worthless, ungrateful creature. Were I to recover, I hope I should show you that I am no longer so: but, alas! that may not be; I must die, without having any opportunity of proving by my actions, either to you or to my God, that I repent of my past folly and wickedness."

"God sees your heart, my dear Rebecca," said Allen much affected. "Actions are not necessary to convince him of your repentance; he will accept it, if it be sincere, as I ardently hope it is."

Another time when she had been earnestly entreating his forgiveness, of which he kindly assured her, she clasped her hands together, exclaiming, "O that I could be equally certain of pardon from my God!"

During a fortnight which she continued to linger, she frequently thanked Allen for his undeserved goodness to her, and entreated him to pray for her. Sometimes she endeavoured to lift up her own heart to Him who made it, and found the effort lessened the weight with which it was oppressed. She often listened with earnest attention to the portions of Scripture, and other good books, which he read to her; yet her fits of anguish and despondency would frequently return. During the last two days of her life, she was more composed: at length she expired, leaving her pious husband consoled with the hope that she died a real penitent; and that although she could not hope for that happiness which has been graciously promised to those who by "patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honour, and immortality," yet that she would as such experience the mercy of her heavenly Father.

When Allen perceived that his unhappy wife was dead, he knelt down by her, and remained a considerable time in earnest devotion; then yielding to the weariness with which he was oppressed, stretched himself upon a small bed, which had been laid upon

the floor for him at the beginning of her illness, and fell asleep. But though he slept some hours, he felt unrefreshed when he awoke. His head and limbs ached, he was thirsty and feverish, and he now became sensible that a very bad cold, which he had caught in consequence of sitting up several severe nights, and which his anxiety about Rebecca had caused him wholly to neglect, was likely to occasion him a serious illness. He endeavoured to rise; but his head grew giddy, and he was obliged to lie down again. Perfectly calm and collected, in the midst of increasing indisposition, he waited patiently until the woman of the house came as usual.

When she entered the room he begged her to give the necessary orders for his wife's funeral, and to fetch the apothecary to him. She hastened to comply with his request, and also went and informed Mr. Harvey of his illness. That gentleman, who had a sincere regard for Allen, went immediately to visit him, and found him patient and resigned, but suffering greatly from the disorder, which proved to be a rheumatic fever. He visited him frequently, and every day sent him some food proper for him in his present state. The widow with whom he lodged nursed him very carefully, and had him removed to her own bed till Rebecca was decently buried, after which he was brought back to his own.

Nothing could exceed the patience with which this humble but pious follower of a "once suffering but now glorified Master" exhibited under the pressure of acute pain. Even when delirious, nothing but prayers and praises proceeded from his lips. He sometimes mentioned his daughter's name, sometimes that of his wife; for whose conversion he would often earnestly pray, believing her to be still alive. At length the disorder fixed in his limbs, which contracted, shrunk, and lost their strength: so that the apothecary pronounced, that although his life

was safe, he would never more be able to walk without the support of crutches. He received this distressing piece of intelligence with that calm fortitude which nothing but a perfect resignation to the will, and confidence in the goodness of God, can inspire. Not a murmur escaped him; he raised his hands and eyes to heaven, as to the place where all his afflictions would soon be exchanged for "joy unspeakable, and full of glory."

"Thou, O my heavenly Father," he exclaimed, "didst bestow upon me many blessings; and since it seemeth right to thine infinite wisdom to deprive me of a part of them, thy will be done!"

When he was sufficiently recovered, his first wish was to pay his debts to the apothecary and his landlady, and what was owing for his wife's funeral. When he had reckoned up the amount of these bills, he found that the little remains of his savings were not sufficient to discharge them. Mr. Harvey, however, kindly made up the deficiency. When this business was settled, this benevolent gentleman exerted his interest to procure him admission into an almshouse, in a town a few miles distant; and having succeeded, he furnished his habitation in a comfortable manner, and engaged to pay a stated sum weekly, to an old woman, a pensioner in the adjoining house, for dressing his food, washing and mending his linen, and keeping his apartment clean. When these arrangements were made, Mr. Harvey took him to the place which was to be his future abode, and saw him seated in an elbow-chair, beside a comfortable fire. He then took his leave, shaking him cordially by the hand, and promising to visit him sometimes, and to supply him with books. When Allen was recovered from the fatigue of his removal, he wrote a long letter to his daughter, who had not yet quitted her room, although she was by that time out of danger. After mentioning that all, and

more than he was worth, went to pay his debts, he proceeded thus:

“And now methinks I see my Elizabeth trembling and agitated, fearful to go on with my letter, lest she should hear of her father being without a home to shelter him. Be tranquil, my child. Thanks be to an all-bountiful Providence, the benevolence of my richer countrymen supplies me with one, in a comfortable well-regulated alms-house. Nay, start not, my beloved, nor let a tear bedew your eyes, at the reflection that I am at the age of fifty-five, a period at which the generality of men enjoy their full strength, an infirm cripple, living upon charity; but let them be raised in devout gratitude to that Being, who put it into the heart of good Mr. Harvey to procure me such a happy asylum.

“Here am I, as far as a human creature can be, out of the reach of want and misfortune. All the necessaries of life are provided for me, without any care of my own. Shut out, as it were, from the world and its concerns, I have full leisure to read the good books with which Mr. Harvey most kindly supplies me; to reflect upon the goodness of my Creator, and to draw nigh to him in spirit. Grieve not then for me my daughter; go on to do your duty to the best of your knowledge and ability; and then, if we never meet again in this world, we shall soon be for ever united, in those blessed mansions prepared for us from the foundation of the world.”

Thus did this good man, by fixing his heart upon another world, so raise it above the evils of this, as to be able not only to feel, but to administer, the sweetest consolation, under circumstances which would have appeared far less tolerable to one who had made worldly happiness his principal object.

He frequently received letters from his daughter, filled with expressions of the tenderest duty and af-

fection, giving him most interesting accounts of her children. Her husband she seldom mentioned; from which her father fully understood, that she had nothing pleasant to communicate concerning him. He was grieved that his beloved child was less happy than she deserved to be; but he felt more satisfied in knowing that she was a meritorious sufferer, than if she had been the most fortunate of human beings, and less worthy.

Let not my readers imagine that all his power of usefulness was now at an end. He still found means of gratifying his benevolent desire of contributing to the present and future good of his fellow-creatures. Several of the pensioners had, before he came, been on ill terms with one another; these he endeavoured to reconcile, and in many instances succeeded. The mildness of his manners, together with his excellent advice and example, so far influenced their general manners, that disputes and quarrels became far less frequent. The woman appointed to attend him was honest, clean, and industrious; but her temper had been so much soured by misfortune, that few could have borne with it. Her ill humour was increased by a dropsical complaint, from which she had for some months suffered much. Of this disorder Allen had the satisfaction of entirely curing her, by a very simple remedy. He persuaded her to drink every morning, as soon as she awoke, a tea-cup full of milk-warm tea, made of red sage, in which was dissolved as much pounded nitre as would stand upon a shilling. This easy, cheap recipe relieved her in a few days.

The poor woman, whose heart was not a bad one, felt extremely grateful for this benefit; and was so completely won by the gentleness with which he bore with her fretful temper, and the kindness with which he listened to her long stories of past misfortunes, that towards him at least, her temper soon

became quite changed, and every one else found it much amended. As she could not read, she took great delight in listening to Allen, who would often indulge her. Seeing the patience with which he bore the evils of life, she became ashamed of indulging a repining spirit; and when he talked to her of the shortness of this life, and the endless happiness promised in another, to those who patiently "endure to the end," she almost resolved never to fret, or be ill-tempered any more.

By his exertions, seconded by those of old Margaret, they at last formed a little society, who met every evening in his apartment, to hear him read in the Bible, and other instructive books with which Mr. Harvey supplied him. The good effects of this custom soon became visible in all who joined in it, but in none so much as in poor Margaret, who found inexpressible comfort from it. The cheerful resignation and gentleness which distinguished Allen, obtained for him the love and esteem of all the pensioners, and the title of the *Patient Man*, by which he was as often mentioned as by his own name. Thus usefully and contentedly had five years passed away, when one evening, the little society being assembled, he was interrupted, whilst reading one of the finest chapters of Isaiah, by a gentle knocking at the door. Upon its being opened, a gentleman who appeared to be about forty years of age, dressed in deep mourning, and of a most engaging aspect, entered, and looking earnestly round the room, advanced towards the venerable reader holding out his hand, and exclaiming, "I am not deceived! You are my old friend, Edward Allen."

Allen bowed his head respectfully, saying, "That is my name, sir. But," added he, looking attentively in his face, "can you pardon the forgetfulness of an old man? Methinks I ought to know that voice and countenance!" He paused. The interesting stranger

smiled; and whilst with one hand he pressed that of Allen, with the other he turned aside the hair from his right temple, and discovered a small but deep scar, at the same time fixing his benignant eyes upon him. No sooner did Allen see this well-known mark, than raising his hand to his lips, he exclaimed, like Jacob, "Let me die, let me die, since I have seen thy face, my dearest master."

"Not your master, but your friend, my dear Allen," said Mr. Charles Freeland, (for it was he himself,) embracing him affectionately: "Mr. Harvey has told me all you have suffered, and how nobly you have borne your sufferings," added he. "Had I been informed of them, all your wants should have been long ago supplied. I have been returned to England only a few weeks; I brought home with me a competence, with which it was my intention to have settled somewhere near the place where I was born. Just as I had finished some business in London, and was preparing to visit my brother, his principal servant arrived in town, and informed me that he was dead, having been seized with a sudden and violent illness, which carried him off in a few hours. In consequence of this most unexpected event, I am now far richer than I ever expected or wished to be. I will, however, endeavour to make such a use of my large fortune, as may render it a blessing to myself and many others; and the first pleasure in which I will indulge myself, shall be to take you out of a situation which is unworthy of you, and place you in some more comfortable habitation, where your old age may be nursed and cherished. Until such an one can be found you shall live in my house; the house in which we both lived so long and so happily, under the protection of my revered father."

"May the Almighty bless and prosper you in it!" exclaimed Allen; "may you while in this world

be a pattern of all that is excellent, and receive in the next an exceeding great reward!"

Whilst Mr. Freeland and Allen were thus entirely taken up with each other, the pensioners had silently withdrawn, conceiving that by so doing they should best show their respect to a gentleman of so much consequence as they believed Mr. Freeland to be. When they were quite alone, that gentleman proceeded thus: "My old friend Mr. Harvey has told me how unjustly and cruelly my late brother used you. I know I need not ask you to forgive him; to such a heart as yours, he will be an object rather of pity than resentment. After I went to India, I made regular inquiries about you, in my letters to my father, and heard from him that you were well and prosperous; but in the first letter I received from my brother, after the death of my dear parent, he informed me, to my utter astonishment, that you had behaved towards him in the most ungrateful and insolent manner, and that he had been obliged to dismiss you from his service. I wrote immediately, to beg that I might be made acquainted with the particulars of your bad conduct, and likewise of the situation and circumstances you were then in; for I was fully persuaded that there must be some strange misunderstanding in the affair, and at all events was resolved that the man who saved my life, and during so many years served my father so faithfully, should not suffer want, whilst I had the power of relieving him. In return for these inquiries, my brother answered, that he had not patience to write a history of your ill behaviour, and that I must be contented with knowing that you had not been dismissed without the utmost necessity. He added, that he understood you had been received into the service of a man of fortune, and were much better off than you deserved to be. You may easily judge, my good Allen," continued Mr. Freeland, "how much I was

shocked, when, calling upon Mr. Harvey yesterday in my way to my own house, I heard from that worthy man a full account of your injuries and sufferings. But come," proceeded he in a more cheerful tone, "they are, I trust, all at an end. Until you can fix upon a place you may like better, you shall live in my house, and partake of all the comforts it affords. My coach is in waiting. Lock up your house and come with me; you may at some future opportunity dispose of your little effects."

"Blessed be God for all his mercies!" exclaimed Allen. "I shall be too, too happy to spend the remainder of my life under your protection. My daughter, too, how will this rejoice her affectionate heart! But yet, dear sir," continued he after a pause, "pardon me if I feel unwilling to go without taking leave of my old companions; we have for some years past been in the habit of meeting every evening, to read and pray together; they will miss me."

"You are right, my friend," said Mr. Freeland. "They shall all be called in, and I will give them something to console them for your loss." So saying, he went to the door, at a few yards' distance from which one of his servants stood, and directed him to request the pensioners, who were eleven in number, to come to Allen's house. They soon obeyed the summons; and Allen, in few words, told them of the happy turn his affairs had taken, thanked them for the kindness he had experienced from them, and intreated them to continue to live in peace with each other, and to assemble for prayer and reading, that they might still continue to feel the comfort such a practice afforded. He then gave to each of them some piece of furniture which he thought would be useful to them; and, when this distribution was made, desired old Margaret to take what remained. Seeing her appear very much grieved, and learning the nature of the connection

which had subsisted between her and Allen, Mr. Freeland gave her some money, and promised to continue to her, during life, the weekly sum she used to receive for attending upon him. He then made such a present to each as was truly acceptable; and strongly recommending to them to continue to be kind and useful to each other, and not to give up their evening meetings, added, "I will, in the course of next week, send each of you who can read, a well-printed Bible; and, if they are made a proper use of, will from time to time supply you with such other books as my friend here shall judge to be fit for you." So saying, he stepped into the coach, amidst the thanks and blessings of those whose sorrow he had converted into joy: and Allen, having cordially shaken hands with each, and received their promises that they would continue to tread in the good path into which he had led them, followed, with tears in his eyes, and a heart overflowing with gratitude to God, and good will towards men.

After a pleasant drive of a few miles, they arrived at the house of Mr. Harvey, who received them with every expression of pleasure and kindness; and the following evening he found himself at home, in the house of his first dear master. Soon after their arrival he was shown into a most comfortable chamber, where every convenience appeared to have been collected together; but what pleased him most, was an arm chair, placed near the fire, and beside a small table, upon which lay an excellent large quarto Bible. These his kind benefactor, who had attended to the regulation of his apartment before he even thought of his own, directed to be placed there, having first written Allen's name in the Bible, with his own hand.

No sooner was the door of this comfortable asylum closed upon him, than he knelt down, and devoutly returned thanks to "the Author and Giver of

all good things" for the many mercies and blessings which he had showered down upon him. Having continued longer than usual at his devotions, he lay down, and most sweet and refreshing was the repose he enjoyed.

So great was Mr. Freeland's kindness to Allen, that except the strong desire he occasionally felt to be blessed with the sight of his daughter and her children, he appeared to have nothing more to wish for in this world. He received frequent and long letters from her, which afforded him such a degree of pleasure, as almost to make him amends for the want of her society.

When Elizabeth was informed of her beloved parent's change of situation, nothing could exceed her joy and thankfulness. In addition to the pleasure of knowing that he would now want for nothing which could contribute to his ease or satisfaction, it occurred to her mind, that as he was no longer in any danger of ever wanting assistance of any kind from her husband, he might be prevailed upon to permit her to pay her father a visit, as her doing so would only occasion her absence from home for a few days. She therefore earnestly intreated him to allow her to do what she considered as a necessary act of duty: but that selfish man, whose health had for some time been declining, absolutely refused his consent. "I cannot," said he, "part with you, for even a short time, without a greater sacrifice of my comfort than I think it at all incumbent upon me to make. I am growing old, my health is very bad; I cannot live long. Make me comfortable for the rest of my life, as you have hitherto done, and when I am dead you can do as you please."

Elizabeth, who knew the inflexibility of his temper, and dreaded to offend him, urged her request no further, well knowing that, had she upon this occasion acted in opposition to the will of her hus-

hand, her father would have been the first to have blamed her; and that, instead of her visit affording him pleasure, it would have been to him a subject of regret and dissatisfaction.

Some months passed away, during which Allen enjoyed good health, and every comfort which the kindness of Mr. Freeland could procure for him. He treated him with the greatest tenderness, received increasing pleasure from his conversation, consulted him upon several benevolent schemes which he had formed, and found great advantage from his good sense, observation, and experience. They were one day settling a plan for a school for the education of poor children, which Mr. Freeland wished to establish in the neighbouring village, when a letter from his daughter, sealed with black, was put into the hands of Allen. From his changes of countenance as he read it, his friend perceived that it contained something of more than usual interest; but whether agreeable, or otherwise, he could not judge, until he saw him clasp his hands together, and raising his eyes to heaven with a look of grateful rapture, remain some time in silent devotion; after which, he put the letter open into Mr. Freeland's hand, who read as follows:

"My dear and honoured father,

"Soon I shall be with you, and enjoy the happiness of seeing my children folded in your arms, and of receiving with them your blessing. My husband is no more; he expired a week ago, after a lingering illness, during which he often expressed great regret for his behaviour to you, and a hope that I would, after his decease, endeavour to atone to you for it.

"A few days before his death, he called me to his bed-side, and, taking my hand, first thanked me for the patience with which I had for so many years borne with his temper, and for my unremitting endeavours to render him happy; then said, 'As a to-

ken of my gratitude, I have left every thing I am worth to you. As you have no son, to whom your keeping on my business would be an advantage, and there is an ample provision for you and your daughters, my partner has agreed to give you a certain sum of money, and to take the whole concern into his own hands."

"I felt thankful to him for his arrangement, which saves me much trouble, and will enable me sooner to be with my dearest father. As I know you like to live in the country, and would be sorry to quit the neighbourhood of your kind friend and generous benefactor, I will give up my house here, and take a moderate-sized one in your neighbourhood.

"That we may be long blessed by your society, and edified by your example, is the fervent prayer of your dutiful and affectionate

"ELIZABETH BARLOWE."

When Mr. Freeland had perused this letter, he most kindly congratulated Allen upon the happy prospect it opened to his view, of spending the remainder of his life with his beloved daughter and her children: then added, "I will settle your residence, my dear friend. The house in which the widow Anson, who is going to live with her mother, now resides, will be vacant before your daughter can dispose of hers and be ready to inhabit it. It is of a moderate size, convenient, and pleasantly situated: it shall be yours. I will settle it upon you and your daughter, during your lives. I will likewise furnish and fit it up in such a manner as I know you will like, and then I perceive, that Mrs. Barlowe will be satisfied."

One blessed with less firmness and piety might have been overpowered, by being thus suddenly put into possession of all he could wish upon earth; but the same strength of mind, the same looking for better things, which had kept him from sinking under the pressure of calamity, now preserved in him a

happy composure of spirit, under the equally trying influence of unexpected prosperity. He was sensible of his happiness; he felt, he enjoyed, he was devoutly grateful for it; but he had not yet attained his chief object, the only object which can satisfy the desire of one who considers this life as only a passage to a better. So strongly was his mind impressed with the conviction, that only what contributes to procure us admission into that blessed kingdom is worthy to be considered as of real importance, that, had it been the will of him who conferred upon him so many blessings, to have again deprived him of them, he would again have resigned them without murmuring, and have exclaimed with pious Job, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord!"

It however pleased the Divine Being, who had already put his piety and resignation to the proof, to spare him any future trials, and to grant that, like the man whose patience his own so much resembled, his "latter end" should be "more blessed than his beginning." Mr. Freeland's plan was put into execution; and the worthy Elizabeth and her children found their own happiness greatly increased by contributing so largely to that of their venerable parent; who lived to a good old age, beloved and respected by all who knew him, and was remembered with affection as long as any who had known him survived.

His misfortunes, and the patience and resignation with which he supported himself under them, were often made the subject of conversation amongst his old friends and neighbours; and it became a frequent custom amongst them, when any one repined at a misfortune, or appeared dissatisfied with his lot, to check his murmuring spirit, by reminding him of the example set him, under equally trying circumstances, by Edward Allen, *the Patient Man*.

M. A. P.

THE

SHEPHERD OF SALISBURY PLAIN.

PRINTED FOR THE TRACT AND BOOK SOCIETY OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF ST. JOHN, PHILADELPHIA.

MR. JOHNSON, a very worthy, charitable gentleman, was travelling across one of those vast plains which are well known in Wiltshire. It was a fine summer's evening, and he rode slowly that he might have leisure to admire God in the works of his creation. For this gentleman was of opinion, that a walk or a ride was as proper a time as any to think about good things; for which reason, on such occasions he seldom thought so much about his money, or his trade, or public news, as at other times, that he might with more ease and satisfaction enjoy the pious thoughts which the visible works of the great Maker of heaven and earth are intended to raise in the mind.

His attention was suddenly called off by the barking of a shepherd's dog, and looking up he spied one of those little huts, which are here and there to be seen on these great downs; and near it was the shepherd himself busily employed with his dog in collecting together his vast flock of sheep. As he drew nearer, he perceived him to be a clean, well-looking, poor man, near fifty years of age. His coat,

though at first it had probably been of a dark colour, had been, in a long course of years, so often patched with different sorts of cloth, that it was now become hard to say which had been the original colour. But this, while it gave a plain proof of the shepherd's poverty, equally proved the exceeding neatness, industry, and good management of his wife. His stockings no less proved her good housewifery, for they were entirely covered with darns of different coloured worsted, but had not a hole in them: and his shirt, though nearly as coarse as the sails of a ship, was as white as the drifted snow, and neatly mended where time had either made a rent, or worn it thin.

Mr. Johnson, who was on a journey, and somewhat fearful, from the appearance of the sky, that rain was at no great distance, accosted the shepherd with asking what sort of weather he thought it would be on the morrow.—“It will be such weather as pleases me,” answered the shepherd. Though the answer was delivered in the mildest tone that could be imagined, the gentleman thought the words themselves rather rude, and asked him how that could be. “Because,” replied the shepherd, “it will be such weather as shall please God, and whatever pleases him always pleases me.”

Mr. Johnson, who delighted in good men and good things, was very well satisfied with his reply. For he justly thought that though an hypocrite may easily contrive to appear better than he really is to a stranger; and that no one should be too soon trusted, merely for having a few good words in his mouth; yet as he knew that “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,” he always accustomed himself to judge favourably of those who had a serious deportment and solid manner of speaking. “It looks as if it proceeded from a good habit,” said he, “and though I may now and then be deceived by it, yet it has not often happened to me to

be so. Whereas, if a man accosts me with an idle, dissolute, vulgar, indecent, or prophane expression, I have never been deceived in him, but have generally, on inquiry, found his character to be as bad as his language gave me room to expect."

He entered into conversation with the shepherd in the following manner. Yours is a troublesome life, honest friend, said he. To be sure, sir, replied the shepherd, 'tis not a very lazy life; but 'tis not near so toilsome as that which my GREAT MASTER led for my sake.—You are exposed to great cold and heat, said the gentleman.—True, sir, said the shepherd; but then I am not exposed to great temptations; and so throwing one thing against another, God is pleased to contrive to make things more equal than we poor, ignorant, short-sighted creatures are apt to think. David was happier when he kept his father's sheep on such a plain as this, and singing some of his own psalms, perhaps, than ever he was when he became king of Israel and Judah. And I dare say we should never have had some of the most beautiful texts in all those fine psalms, if he had not been a shepherd, which enabled him to make so many ~~fine~~ comparisons and similitudes, as one may say, from a country life, flocks of sheep, hills and valleys, and fountains of water.

You think, then, said the gentleman, that a laborious life is a happy one.—I do, sir, and more so especially, as it exposes a man to fewer sins. If king Saul had continued a poor laborious man to the end of his days, he might have lived happy and honest, and died a natural death in his bed at last, which you know, sir, was more than he did. But I speak with reverence, for it was Divine Providence overruled all that, you know, sir, and I do not presume to make comparisons. Besides, sir, my employment has been particularly honoured. Moses was a shepherd in the plains of Midian. It was to "shepherds keeping

their flocks by night," that the angels appeared in Bethlehem, to tell the best news, the gladdest tidings, that ever were revealed to poor sinful men: often, and often has the thought warmed my poor heart in the coldest night, and filled me with more joy and thankfulness than the best supper could have done.

Here the shepherd stopped, for he began to feel that he made too free, and had talked too long. But Mr. Johnson was so well pleased with what he said, and with the cheerful manner in which he said it, that he desired him to go on freely, for that it was a pleasure to him to meet with a plain man, who, without any kind of learning but what he had got from the Bible, was able to talk so well on a subject in which all men, high and low, rich and poor, are equally concerned.

Indeed, I am afraid I make too bold, sir, for it better becomes me to listen to such a gentleman as you seem to be, than to talk in my poor way; but as I was saying, sir, I wonder all working men do not derive as great joy and delight as I do from thinking how God has honoured poverty! Oh! sir, what great, or rich, or mighty men have had such honour put on them, or their condition, as ~~Servants~~ ^{Servants}, Tent-makers, Fishermen, and Carpenters have had?

My honest friend, said the gentleman, I perceive you are well acquainted with scripture.—Yes, sir, pretty well, blessed be God! through his mercy I learnt to read when I was a little boy; though reading was not so common when I was a child, as I am told, through the goodness of Providence, and the generosity of the rich, it is likely to become now-a-days. I believe there is no day for the last thirty years, that I have not peeped at my Bible. If we can't find time to read a chapter, I defy any man to say he can't find time to read a verse; and a single text, sir, well followed and put in practice every day, would make no bad figure at the year's end; three

hundred and sixty-five texts, without the loss of a moment's time, would make a pretty stock, a little golden treasury, as one may say, from new-year's day, to new-year's day, and if children were brought up to it, they would look for their text as naturally as they do for their breakfast.

No labouring man, 'tis true, has so much leisure as a shepherd, for while the flock is feeding, I am obliged to be still, and at such times I can now and then tap a shoe for my children or myself, which is a great saving to us; and while I am doing that, I repeat a bit of a chapter, which makes the time pass pleasantly in this wild solitary place. I can say the best part of the Bible by heart, I believe I should not say the best part, for every part is good, but I mean the greatest part. I have led but a lonely life, and have often had but little to eat, but my Bible has been meat, drink, and company to me, as I may say, and when want and trouble have come upon me, I don't know what I should have done indeed, sir, if I had not had the promises of this book for my stay and support.

You have had great difficulties, then? said Mr. Johnson.—Why, as to that, sir, not more than neighbours fare; I have but little cause to complain, and much to be thankful; but I have had some little struggles, as I will leave you to judge. I have a wife and eight children, whom I bred up in that little cottage which you see under the hill about half a mile off.—What, that with the smoke coming out of the chimney, said the gentleman.—O no, sir, replied the shepherd, smiling, we have seldom smoke in the evening, for we have little to cook, and firing is very dear in these parts. 'Tis that cottage which you see on the left hand of the church, near that little tuft of hawthorns.—What! that hovel with only one room above and one below, with scarcely any chimney! How is it possible you can live there with such a fa-

mily?—O! it is very possible and very certain too, cried the shepherd. How many better men have been worse lodged! how many good christians have perished in prisons and dungeons, in comparison of which my cottage is a palace. The house is very well, sir, and if the rain did not sometimes beat down upon us through the thatch when we are a-bed, I should not desire a better; for I have health, peace, and liberty, and no man maketh me afraid.

Well, I will certainly call on you before it be long; but how can you contrive to lodge so many children? —We do the best we can, sir. My poor wife is a very sickly woman, or we should always have done tolerably well. The good curate of the parish who lives in that pretty parsonage in the valley, is very willing, but not very able to assist us on these trying occasions. Yet he does what he can, and more than many richer men do, and more than he can well afford. Besides that, his prayers and good advice we are always sure of, and we are truly thankful for that, for a man must give, you know, sir, according to what he hath, and not according to what he hath not.

Are you in any distress at present? said Mr. Johnson.—No, sir, thank God, replied the shepherd. I get my shilling a day, and most of my children will soon be able to earn something; for we have only three under five years of age.—Only! said the gentleman; that is a heavy burden.—Not at all; God fits the back to it. Though my wife is not able to do any out of door work, yet she breeds up our children to such habits of industry, that our little maids before they are six years old can first get a halfpenny, and then a penny a day by knitting. The boys who are too little to do hard work, get a trifle by keeping the birds off the corn; for this the farmers will give them a penny or two-pence, and now and then a bit of bread and cheese into the bargain. When the season of crow-keeping is over, then they clean or pick

stones ; any thing is better than idleness, sir, and if they do not get a farthing by it, I would make them do it just the same, for the sake of giving them early habits of labour.

So you see, sir, I am not so badly off as many are ; nay, if it were not that it costs me so much in apothecary's stuff for my poor wife, I should reckon myself well off, for blessed be God, he has granted her life to my prayers, and I would live on one meal a-day to add any comfort to her valuable life ; indeed I have often done this, and thought it no great matter neither.

While they were on this part of the discourse, a fine plump cherry-cheek little girl ran up out of breath, with a smile on her young happy face, and without taking any notice of the gentleman, cried out with great joy—Look here, father, only see how much I have got to-day ! Mr. Johnson was much struck with her simplicity ; but puzzled to know what was the occasion of this great joy. On looking at her he perceived a small quantity of coarse wool, some of which had found its way through the holes of her clean, but scanty and ragged woollen apron. The father said, this has been a successful day indeed, Molly, but don't you see the gentleman ? Molly now made a curtsy down to the very ground, while Mr. Johnson inquired into the cause of the mutual satisfaction which both father and daughter had expressed, at the unusual good fortune of the day.

Sir, said the shepherd, poverty is a great sharpen-er of wits—My wife and I cannot endure to see our children (poor as they are,) without shoes and stockings, not only on account of the pinching cold which cramps their poor little limbs, but because it degrades and debases them ; and poor people who have but little regard to appearances, will seldom be found to have any great regard for honesty and goodness ; I don't say this is always the case ; but I am sure it is

so too often. Now shoes and stockings being very dear, we could never afford to get them without a little contrivance. I must show you how I manage about the shoes when you condescend to call at our cottage, sir; as to stockings, this is one way we take to help get them. My young ones who are too little to do much work, sometimes wander over the hills for the chance of finding what little wool the sheep may drop when they rub themselves, as they are apt to do, in the bushes. These scattered bits of wool the children pick out of the brambles, which I see, have torn sad holes in Molly's apron to-day; they carry this wool home, and when they have got a pretty parcel together, their mother cards it; for she can sit and card in the chimney corner, when she is not able to wash, or work about house. The biggest girl then spins it; it does very well for us without dying. After this our little boys knit it for themselves, while they are employed in keeping crows off the fields, and after they get home at night. As for the knitting the girls and their mother do, that is chiefly for sale, which helps to pay our rent.

Mr. Johnson lifted up his eyes in silent astonishment at the shifts which honest poverty can make rather than beg or steal; and was surprised to think how many ways of subsisting there are, which those who live at their ease little suspect. He secretly resolved to be more attentive to his own petty expenses than he had hitherto been; and to be more watchful that nothing was wasted in his family.

But to return to the shepherd. Mr. Johnson told him that as he must needs be at his friend's house, who lived many miles off, that night, he could not as he wished to do, make a visit to his cottage at present. But I will certainly do it, said he, on my return, for I long to see your wife and her nice little family, and to be an eye witness of her neatness and good management. The poor man's tears started into his

eyes on hearing the commendation bestowed on his wife ; and wiping them off with the sleeve of his coat, for he was not worth a handkerchief in the world, he said—Oh ! sir, you just now, I am afraid, called me an humble man, but indeed I am a very proud one. Proud ! exclaimed Mr. Johnson, I hope not—Pride is a great sin, and as the poor are liable to it as well as the rich, so good a man as you seem to be, ought to guard against it. Sir, said he, you are right, but I am not proud of myself, God knows, I have nothing to be proud of. I am a poor sinner ; but indeed, sir, I am proud of my wife : she is not only the most tidy, notable woman on the plain, but she is the kindest wife and mother, and the most contented, thankful christian that I know. Last year I thought I should have lost her in a violent fit of the rheumatism ; for 'tis but a cold place, as you may see, sir, in winter, and sometimes the snow lies so long under the hill, that I can hardly make myself a path to get out and buy a few necessaries in the next village ; and we are afraid to send out the children, for fear they should be lost, when the snow is deep. So, as I was saying, the poor soul was very bad indeed, and for several weeks lost the use of all her limbs except her hands ; a merciful Providence spared her the use of these, so that when she could not turn in her bed, she could contrive to patch a rag or two for her family. She was always saying, had it not been for the great goodness of God, she might have had the palsy instead of the rheumatism, and then she could have done nothing—but nobody had so many mercies as she had.

I will not tell you what we suffered during that bitter weather, sir ; but my wife's faith and patience during that trying time, were as good a lesson to me as any sermon I could hear ; and yet Mr. Jenkins gave us very comfortable ones too, that helped to keep up my spirits.

One Sunday afternoon when my wife was at the worst, as I was coming out of Church, for I went one part of the day, and my eldest daughter the other, so my poor wife was never left alone: As I was coming out of Church, I say, Mr. Jenkins the minister called out to me, and asked me how my wife did, saying he had been kept from coming to see her by the deep fall of snow; and indeed from the parsonage-house to my hovel it was quite impassable. I gave him all the particulars he asked, and I am afraid a good many more, for my heart was quite full. He kindly gave me a shilling, and said he would certainly try to pick out his way and come and see her in a day or two.

While he was talking to me, a plain farmer-looking gentleman in boots, who stood by, listened to all I said but seemed to take no notice. It was Mr. Jenkins' wife's father, who was come to pass the Christmas holidays at the parsonage-house. I had always heard him spoken of as a plain frugal man, who lived close himself, but was remarked to give away more than any of his show-away neighbours.

Well! I went home with great spirits at this seasonable and unexpected supply; for we had tapped our last six-pence, and there was little work to be had on account of the weather. I told my wife I was not come back empty handed. No, I dare say not, says she, you have been serving a master "who filleth the hungry with good things, though he sendeth the rich empty away." True, Mary, says I: we seldom fail to get good spiritual food from Mr. Jenkins, but to day he has kindly supplied our bodily wants. She was more thankful when I showed her the shilling, than I dare say, some of your great people are when they get a hundred pounds.

Mr. Johnson's heart smote him when he heard such a value set upon a shilling; surely, said he to himself, I will never waste another; but he said nothing to the shepherd, who thus pursued his story.

Next morning before I went out, I sent part of the money to buy a little ale and brown sugar to put into her water gruel ; which you know, sir, made it nice and nourishing. I went out to cleave wood in a farm-yard, for there was no standing out on the plain after such a snow as had fallen in the night. I went with a lighter heart than usual, because I had left my poor wife a little better, and comfortably supplied for this day, and I now resolved more than ever to trust in God for the supplies of the next. When I came back at night, my wife fell a crying as soon as she saw me. Look here, John ! So saying she uncovered the bed whereon she lay, and showed me two warm, thick, new blankets. I could not believe my own eyes, sir ; because when I went out in the morning, I had left her with no other covering than our little old thin blue rug. I was still more amazed when she put half a crown into my hand, telling me she had had a visit from Mr. Jenkins, and Mr. Jones, the latter of whom had bestowed all these good things upon us. Thus, sir, have our lives been crowned with mercies. My wife got about again, and I do believe, under Providence, it was owing to these comforts ; for the rheumatism, sir, without blankets by night and flannel by day, is but a bad job, especially to people who have little or no fire. She will always be a weakly body ; but thank God her soul prospers and is in health. But I beg your pardon, sir, for talking on at this rate. Not at all, not at all, said Mr. Johnson, you shall certainly see me in a few days. Good night. So saying, he slipped a crown into his hand, and rode off. Surely, said the shepherd, *goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life*, as he gave the money to his wife when he got home at night.

As to Mr. Johnson, he found abundant matter for his thoughts during the rest of his journey. On the whole he was more disposed to envy than to pity the shepherd. I have seldom seen, said he, so happy a

man. It is a sort of happiness which the world could not give, and which I plainly see, it has not been able to take away. This must be the true spirit of religion. I see more and more, that true goodness is not merely a thing of words and opinions, but a living principle brought into every common action of a man's life. What else could have supported this poor couple under every bitter trial of want, and sickness? No, my honest shepherd, I do not pity, but I respect and even honour thee; and I will visit thy poor hovel on my return to Salisbury with as much pleasure as I am now going to the house of my friend.

Mr. Johnson after having passed some time with his friends, sat out on his return to Salisbury, and on the Saturday evening reached a very small inn, a mile or two distant from the shepherd's village. He went the next morning to the church nearest the house where he had passed the night; and after taking such refreshments as he could get at the house, he walked on to find the shepherd's cottage. His reason for visiting him on Sunday was chiefly, because he supposed it to be the only day which the shepherd's employment allowed him to pass at home with his family; and he thought it would neither be unpleasant nor unprofitable to observe how a man who carried such an appearance of piety spent his Sunday. For it is not so much by observing how people talk, as how they live, that we ought to judge of their characters.

After a pleasant walk Mr. Johnson got within sight of the cottage, to which he was directed by the clump of hawthorns and the broken chimney. He wished to take the family by surprise; and walking gently up to the house he stood awhile to listen. The door being half open, he saw the shepherd, (who looked so respectable in his Sunday coat that he should hardly have known him) his wife, and their numerous young family, draw round their little table,

which was covered with a clean though very coarse cloth. There stood on it a large dish of potatoes, a brown pitcher, and a piece of coarse loaf. The wife and children stood in silent attention, while the shepherd with his up-lifted hands and eyes, devoutly begged the blessing of heaven on their homely fare. Mr. Johnson could not help sighing to reflect, that he had sometimes seen better dinners eaten with less appearance of thankfulness.

The shepherd and his wife then sat down with great seeming cheerfulness, but the children stood; and while the mother was helping them, little fresh coloured Molly who had picked the wool from the bushes with so much delight, cried out, "Father, I wish I was big enough to say grace; I am sure I should say it very heartily to-day, for I was thinking what must *poor* people do who have no salt to their potatoes; and do but look, our dish is quite full."—"This is the true way of thinking, Molly," said the father; "in whatever concerns bodily wants, and bodily comforts, it is our duty to compare our own lot with the lot of those who are worse off, and this will keep us thankful. On the other hand, whenever we are tempted to set up our own wisdom or goodness, we must compare ourselves with those who are wiser and better, and that will keep us humble." Molly was now so hungry, and found the potatoes so good, that she had no time to make any more remarks; but was devouring her dinner very heartily; when the barking of the great dog drew her attention from her trencher to the door, and spying the stranger, she cried out, "Look father, see here, if yonder is not the good gentleman!" Mr. Johnson finding himself discovered, immediately walked in, and was heartily welcomed by the honest shepherd, who told his wife that this was the gentleman to whom they were so much obliged.

The good woman began with making many apo-

logies that her house was not cleaner, and that things were not in fitter order to receive such a gentleman. Mr. Johnson, however on looking round, could discover nothing but the most perfect neatness. The furniture was very simple and poor, hardly indeed amounting to bare necessities. An old carved elbow-chair, and a chest of the same date which stood in the corner, were considered as the most valuable part of the shepherd's goods, having been in his family for three generations. But all these were lightly esteemed by him, in comparison with another possession, which he inherited from his father, and which he would not have parted with, if no other could have been had, for a king's ransom: this was a large old Bible, which lay on the window seat, neatly covered with brown cloth. This sacred book was most reverently preserved from dog's ears, dirt, and every other injury but such as time and much use had made it suffer in spite of care.

After the first salutations were over, Mr. Johnson said, that if they would go on quietly with their dinner he would sit down; and having cast his eye on their slender provisions, gently rebuked the shepherd for not having indulged himself, as it was Sunday, with a morsel of bacon to relish his potatoes. The shepherd said nothing, but poor Mary coloured, and hung down her head, saying, "indeed, sir, it is not my fault; I did beg my husband to allow himself a bit of meat to-day out of your honour's bounty; but he was too good to do it, and it is all for my sake." The shepherd seemed unwilling to come to an explanation, but Mr. Johnson desired Mary to go on. So she continued, "you must know, sir, that both of us next to a sin, dread a debt, and indeed in some cases a debt is a sin; but with all our care and pains we have never been able quite to pay off the doctor's bill, for that bad fit of the rheumatism which I had last winter. Now when you were pleased to give my

husband that kind present the other day, I heartily desired him to buy a bit of meat for Sunday, as I said before, that he might have a little refreshment for himself out of your kindness. But, answered he, Mary it is never out of my mind long, that we still owe a few shillings to the doctor, (and thank God it is all we did owe in this world.) Now if I carry him this money directly it will not only show him our honesty and our good will, but it will be an encouragement to him to come to you another time ; for I must own, added my poor husband, that the thought of your being so terribly ill without any help, is the only misfortune that I want courage to face."

Here the grateful woman's tears ran down so fast that she could not go on. " Indeed, sir," said the shepherd, " though my wife is as unwilling to be in debt as myself, yet I could hardly prevail on her to consent to my paying this money just then, because she said it was hard I should not have a taste of the gentleman's bounty myself. But, for once, sir, I would have my own way. For you must know, as I pass the best part of my time alone, tending my sheep, 'tis a great point with me, sir, to get comfortable matter for my own thoughts ; so that it is rather self-interest in me to allow myself in no pleasures and no practices that won't bear thinking on over and over. For when one is a good deal alone, you know, sir, all one's bad deeds do so rush in upon one, as I may say, and so torment one, that there is no true comfort to be had but in keeping clear of wrong doings, and false pleasures ; and that I suppose may be one reason why so many folks hate to stay by themselves.—But as I was saying—when I came to think the matter over on the hill yonder, said I to myself, a good dinner is a good thing I grant, and yet it will be but cold comfort to me a week after to be able to say—to be sure I had a nice Sunday dinner, thanks to the good gentleman, but then I am in

debt;—I had a rare dinner, that's certain, but the pleasure of that has long been over, and the debt still remains; I have spent the crown, and now if my poor wife should be taken in one of those fits again, die she must, unless God work a miracle to prevent it, for I can get no help for her. This thought settled all; and I set off directly and paid the crown to the doctor with cheerfulness. And if I was contented at the time, think how much more happy I have been at the remembrance! O sir, there are no pleasures worth the name, but such as bring no plague or penitence after them."

Mr. Johnson was satisfied with the shepherd's reasons; and agreed, that though a good dinner was not to be despised, yet it was not worthy to be compared with a *contented mind*, which (as the Bible truly says) is a *continual feast*. "But come," said the good gentleman, "what have we got in this brown mug?" "As good water," said the shepherd, "as any in the world. I have often heard of countries beyond sea in which there is no wholesome water; nay, I have been myself in a great town not far off where they are obliged to buy all the water they get, while a good Providence sends to my very door a spring as clear and fine as Jacob's well. When I am tempted to repine that I have often no other drink, I call to my remembrance that it was nothing better than a cup of cold water which the woman of Samaria drew for the greatest guest that ever visited this world."

"Very well," replied Mr. Johnson; "but as your honesty has made you prefer a poor meal to being in debt, I will at least send and get something for you to drink. I saw a little public-house just by the church, as I came along. Let that little rosy-face fellow fetch a mug of beer."

"Sir," said the shepherd, "I hope we shall not appear ungrateful, if we seem to refuse your favour;

my little boy would, I am sure, fly to serve you on any other occasion. But good sir, it is Sunday, and should any of my family be seen at a public-house on a Sabbath-day, it would be a much greater grief to me than to drink water all my life. I am often talking against these doings to others, and if I should say one thing and do another, you can't think what an advantage it would give many of my neighbours over me, who would be glad to report that they caught the shepherd's son at the ale-house without explaining how it happened. Christians, you know, sir, ought to be doubly watchful, or they will not only bring disgrace on themselves, but what is much worse, on that holy name by which they are called."

"Are you not a little too cautious, my honest friend?" said Mr. Johnson. "I humbly ask your pardon, sir," replied the shepherd, "if I think that is impossible. I no more understand, how a man can be too cautious, than how he can be too strong or too healthy."

"You are right, indeed," said Mr. Johnson, "as a general principle, but this struck me as a very small thing." "Sir," said the shepherd, "I doubt, if where there is a temptation to do wrong, any thing can be called small. A poor man like me is seldom called to do great things, so that it is not by a few great deeds his character can be judged, but by the little round of daily customs he allows himself in."—While they were thus talking, the children who had stood very quietly behind, now began to scamper about all at once, and in a moment ran to the window-seat to pick up their little old hats. Mr. Johnson looked surprised at this disturbance; the shepherd asked his pardon, telling him it was the sound of the church bell which had been the cause of their rudeness; for their mother had brought them up with such fear of being too late for church, that it was but who could catch the first stroke of the bell, and be first ready.

He had always taught them to think that nothing was more indecent than to get into church after it was begun.

Mary and her children set forward. Mr. Johnson and the shepherd followed, taking care to talk the whole way on such subjects as might fit them for the solemn duties of the place to which they were going. "I have often been sorry to observe," said Mr. Johnson, "that many who are reckoned decent, good kind of people, and who would on no account neglect going to church, yet seem to care but little in what frame or temper of mind they go thither. They will talk of their worldly concerns till they get within the door, and then take them up again the very minute the sermon is over, which makes me ready to fear they lay too much stress on the mere form of going to a place of worship. Now, for my part, I always find that it requires a little time to bring my mind into a state fit to do any *common* business well, much more this great and most necessary business of all." "Yes, sir," said the shepherd, "and then I think too how busy I should be in preparing my mind, if I was going into the presence of a great gentleman, or a lord, or the king; and shall the King of Kings be treated with less respect? people feel as if going to church was a thing of choice and pleasure, as well as duty."

After service, Mr. Jenkins the clergyman, who was well acquainted with the character of Mr. Johnson, and had a great respect for him, accosted him with much civility; expressing his concern that he could not enjoy just now so much of his conversation as he wished, as he was obliged to visit a sick person at a distance, but hoped to have a little talk with him before he left the village. As they walked along together, Mr. Johnson made such inquiries about the shepherd, as served to confirm him in the high opinion he entertained of his piety, good sense,

industry, and self-denial. They parted, the clergyman promising to call at the cottage in his way home.

The shepherd, who took it for granted that Mr. Johnson was gone to the parsonage, walked home with his wife and children, and was beginning in his usual way to catechise and instruct his family, when Mr. Johnson came in, and insisted that the shepherd should go on with his instructions, just as if he were not there. This gentleman, who was very desirous of being useful to his own servants and workmen in the way of religious instruction, was sometimes sorry to find that though he took a good deal of pains, they did not now and then quite understand him, for though his meaning was very good, the language was not always very plain; and though the *things* he said were not hard to be understood, yet the *words* were, especially to such as were very ignorant. And he now began to find out that if people were ever so wise and good, yet if they had not a simple, agreeable and familiar way of expressing themselves, some of their plain hearers would not be much the better for them. For this reason he was not above listening to the plain, humble way in which this honest man taught his family.

This gentleman was much pleased with the knowledge and piety he discovered in the answers of the children; and desired the shepherd to tell him how he contrived to keep up a sense of divine things in his own mind and in that of his family with so little leisure and so little reading. "O as to that, sir," said the shepherd, "we do not read much except in one book to be sure; but by hearty prayer for God's blessing on the use of that book, what little knowledge is needful seems to come of course, as it were. And my chief study has been to bring the fruits of the Sunday reading into the week's business, and to keep up the same sense of God in the heart, when the

Bible is in the cupboard as when it is in the hand. In short, to apply what I read in the book, to what I meet with in the field."

"I don't quite understand you," said Mr. Johnson. "Sir," replied the shepherd, "I have but a poor gift at conveying these things to others, though I have much comfort from them in my own mind; but I am sure that the most ignorant and hard-working people, who are in earnest about their salvation, may help to keep up devout thoughts and good affections during the week, though they have hardly any time to look at a book.—And it will help them to keep out bad thoughts too, which is no small matter. But then they must know the Bible; they must have read the word of God; that is a kind of stock in trade for a Christian to set up with; and it is this which makes me so diligent in teaching it to my children; and even in storing their memories with Psalms and Chapters. This is a great help to a poor hard-working man, who will hardly meet with any thing but what he may turn to some good account. If one lives in the fear and the love of God, almost every thing one sees abroad will teach one to adore his power and goodness, and bring to mind some texts of Scripture, which shall fill the heart with thankfulness, and the mouth with praise. When I look upwards *the Heavens declare the glory of God*; and shall I be silent and ungrateful? if I look round and see the vallies standing thick with corn, how can I help blessing that Power, who *giveth me all things richly to enjoy*? I may learn gratitude from the beasts of the field, for the *ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib*; and shall a Christian not consider, what great things God has done for him? I, who am a shepherd, endeavour to fill my soul with a constant remembrance of that good shepherd, who *feedeth me in green pastures, and maketh me to lie down beside the still waters, and whose rod and staff comfort me.*"

"You are happy," said Mr. Johnson, "in this retired life by which you escape the corruptions of the world." "Sir," said the shepherd, "different states have different temptations. You great folks that live in the world, perhaps are exposed to some, of which such a poor man as I am, know nothing. But to one who leads a lonely life like me, evil thoughts are a chief besetting sin; and I can no more withstand these without the grace of God, than a rich man can withstand the snares of evil company, without the same grace. And I feel that I stand in need of God's help continually."

Mr. Johnson approved of the shepherd's sincerity; for he had always observed that where there was no humility, and no watchfulness against sin, there was no religion.

Just as they were in this part of their discourse, Mr. Jenkins, the clergyman came in. After the usual salutations, he said, "well shepherd, I wish you joy; I know you will be sorry to gain any advantage by the death of a neighbour; but old Wilson my clerk, was so infirm, and I trust so well prepared, that there is no reason to be sorry for his death. I have been to pray by him, but he died while I stayed. I have always intended you should succeed to his place; 'tis no great matter, but every little is something."

"No great matter, sir," cried the shepherd, "indeed it is a great thing to me; it will more than pay my rent. Blessed be God for all his goodness." Mary said nothing, but lifted up her eyes full of tears in silent gratitude.

"I am glad of this little circumstance," said Mr. Jenkins, "not only for your sake, but for the sake of the office itself. I so heartily reverence every religious institution, that if it depended on me, there should be no such thing in the land as an idle, drunken, or irreligious Parish Clerk. Sorry I am to say, that this matter is not always sufficiently attend-

ed to, and that I know some of a very indifferent character."

"Shepherd," said Mr. Johnson, "if I was a King, and had it in my power to make you a rich and great man, with a word speaking, I would not do it. Those who are raised by some sudden stroke, much above the station in which Divine Providence has placed them, seldom turn out very good, or very happy. I have never had any great things in my power; but as far as I have been able, I have been always glad to assist the worthy. What rent do you pay for this cottage?"

"Fifty shillings a year, sir."

"It is in a sad tattered condition; is there not a better to be had in the village?"

"That in which the poor clerk lived," said the clergyman, "is not only more tight and whole, but has two decent chambers, and a very large light kitchen."—"That will be very convenient," replied Mr. Johnson, "pray what is the rent?" "I think," said the shepherd, "poor neighbour Wilson gave somewhat about four pounds a year, or it might be guineas."—"Very well," said Mr. Johnson, "and what will the clerk's place be worth, think you?" "About three pounds," was the answer.

"Now," continued Mr. Johnson, "my plan is, that the shepherd should take that house immediately; for as the poor man is dead, there will be no need of waiting till quarter day, if I make up the difference." "True, sir," said Mr. Jenkins, "and I am sure my wife's father, whom I expect to-morrow, will willingly assist a little towards buying some of the clerk's old goods. And the sooner they remove the better, for poor Mary caught that bad rheumatism by sleeping under a leaky thatch." The shepherd was too much moved to speak, and Mary could hardly sob out, "Oh! sir, you are too good, indeed this house will do very well." "It may do very well for

you and your children, Mary," said Mr. Johnson, gravely, "but it will not do for a school; the kitchen is neither large nor light enough. Shepherd," continued he, "with your good minister's leave, and kind assistance, I propose to set up in this parish a Sunday school, and to make you the master. It will not at all interfere with your weekly calling; and it is the only lawful way in which you could turn the Sabbath into a day of some little profit to your family, by doing as I hope, a great deal of good to the souls of others. The rest of the week you will work as usual. The difference of rent between this house and the clerk's I shall pay myself, for to put you into a better house at your own expense would be no great act of kindness—As for honest Mary, who is not fit for hard labour, or any out-of-door work, I propose to endow a small weekly school, of which she shall be the mistress, and employ her notable turn to good account, by teaching ten or a dozen girls to knit, sew, spin, card, or any other useful way of getting their bread; for all this I shall only pay her the usual price, for I am not going to make you rich but useful."

"Not rich, sir?" cried the shepherd. "How can I ever be thankful enough for such blessings? And will my poor Mary have a dry thatch over her head? and shall I be able to send for the doctor when I am like to lose her? Indeed my cup runs over with blessings; I hope God will give me humility." Here he and Mary looked at each other and burst into tears. The gentlemen saw their distress, and kindly walked out upon the little green before the door, that these honest people might give vent to their feelings. As soon as they were alone they crept into one corner of the room, where they thought they could not be seen, and fell on their knees, devoutly blessing and praising God for his mercies. Never were heartier prayers presented than this grateful couple offered up for

their benefactors. The warmth of their gratitude could only be equalled by the earnestness with which they besought the blessing of God on the work in which they were going to engage.

The two gentlemen now left this happy family, and walked to the Parsonage, where the evening was spent in a manner very edifying to Mr. Johnson, who the next day took all proper measures for putting the shepherd in immediate possession of his new comfortable habitation. Mr. Jenkins' father-in-law, the worthy gentleman who gave the shepherd's wife the blankets, in the first part of this history, arrived at the parsonage before Mr. Johnson left it, and assisted in fitting up the clerk's cottage.

Mr. Johnson took his leave, promising to call on the worthy minister and his new clerk once a year, in his summer's journey over the plain, as long as it should please GOD to spare his life.

DRY

ILLIAMS.

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THE
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THE
HISTORY
OF
ELENOR WILLIAMS.

IN a pretty village, about three miles distant from Bristol, lived a woman named Elenor Williams. She was one of its oldest inhabitants, being upwards of seventy years of age; and was so much beloved for her kind, benevolent, pious disposition, that she was generally distinguished by the title of *good Mrs. Williams*. By industry and economy she had saved sufficient to enable her to live in comfort, and to spare something to her poor neighbours; besides which, she found various ways of being useful to them. She was an excellent nurse and skilful doctress, and many of the villagers who were too poor to call in a doctor when they were ill, owed the preservation of their lives to her kind attentions.

Nor were her exertions confined to the restoration of bodily health: she was unwearied in her endeavours to lead all with whom she conversed into that path of righteousness which she had herself so happily trodden. She earnestly prayed her heavenly Father that her efforts might not be wholly vain. "The prayer of the righteous availeth much;" she enjoyed the never ending satisfaction of turning many sinners from their evil ways, inspiring them with the love of virtue, and leading them to the practice of it. Much of her time was spent in endeavouring to instil into the tender minds of her young neighbours, the great principles of truth, honesty and sobriety; founded upon humble love and profound reverence towards their Creator, and upon an ardent desire to please, and fear to offend.

him. She likewise exerted every means in her power, to wean them from habits of idleness, that great destroyer of goodness; and to induce them to become useful to the extent of their strength and power: thus striving to lay for them the foundation of a virtuous and comfortable life, and what is of far greater importance, to open to them the glorious prospect of that life, where the righteous shall enjoy perfect and never ending happiness.

Mrs. Williams was, as benevolent people usually are, very fond of children and young people, and generally beloved by them. Her most distinguished favourite was Fanny White, the daughter of a respectable farmer in the village, who had married her niece. Fanny was about fifteen years old; sensible, well disposed, and much attached to her great aunt, with whom she spent a large part of her time, and would gladly give up the gayest party of young persons of her own age, to sit and converse with her. Indeed Mrs. Williams's manners, although perfectly simple, were so much superior to those of the generality of people in her rank of life, her dress was so neat, her house so clean and comfortable, and her countenance expressed so much benevolent sweetness, mingled with intelligence, that it was impossible for any body possessed of a good heart, although unacquainted with her story and ignorant of her character, to enter her habitation, see her and hear her speak, without feeling inclined to love and respect her.

One evening, having prepared her dish of coffee, her young favourite entered, saying, as she ran to embrace her, "my dear aunt, my mother is gone to drink tea at Mrs. Grant's, and has given me leave to stay with you till eight o'clock, if you will permit me."

"I am always happy in your company, my love," said Mrs. Williams, kissing her affectionately, "and this evening I particularly wanted you; for I am going to make a cap for poor old Betty Lewis, and as my eyes are not so good as they were a few years ago, you shall assist me."

"With the greatest pleasure," said Fanny, "and whilst we work, perhaps you will have the goodness to tell me some pretty story."

"I shall be sorry to disappoint you, my dear child," said Mrs. Williams, "but I fear I have told you all I know."

"I hope not," answered Fanny, "I hope you will recollect many more." Then after a pause she added, affectionately taking her hand, "I have thought of something which will do charmingly, if you approve it."

"What may that be?" asked Mrs. Williams, with an encouraging smile.

"I have remarked," replied Fanny, "that among the stories which you have told me, those about good people have always been the most pleasing. Now my dear aunt, as you are one of the best women in the world, your history, if you will be so kind as to relate it, will, I am sure, make a delightful story."

"My love," said Mrs. Williams, "you judge of my merit by your affection for me."

"No indeed I do not," interrupted Fanny, "for every body loves you; and you knew, you are generally distinguished by the title of good Mrs. Williams; besides which, my mother, who I am sure would not on any account tell an untruth, is always praising you, and saying that, under heaven, she owes every thing to you."

"Your mother," said Mrs. Williams, "is a truly good woman, and that I have by the divine blessing contributed to render her so, is one of my greatest sources of happiness and gratitude. Happy lives seldom contain any thing worth relating; and mine has upon the whole been a very happy one: nevertheless, as you wish to hear it and nothing better offers itself to my memory, I will recount it."

"Thank you, my dear, kind aunt," said Fanny, in a joyful tone, "you shall see how industrious I will be in return for your goodness."

When the repast was ended, she took her work, and seating herself near her aunt, requested her to begin

her history, which she, happy in affording pleasure to one she loved, did in the following words :

“ My father was a bricklayer, and lived in a village near Monmouth. He was honest, sober, industrious, and good tempered : and my mother was a pattern to women in her humble situation. They had five children, of whom I was the youngest. By denying themselves nearly every thing, except absolute necessities, my parents were enabled to put my sister and my three brothers each to a day school for two years. My brothers took great delight in learning, and were so industrious that at the end of this time, they could read well and write, and cast accounts sufficiently to be of great use to them when they went out into the world. My sister, who was seven years older than myself, lived during the first eight years of her life, with my father’s mother, who, in general, humoured her to a very great degree, although at times she would be unreasonably passionate and severe with her.

“ My mother often expressed a strong wish to have her at home, saying she feared her temper and disposition would be quite ruined by such very wrong treatment ; and that she would rather work ever so hard to support her children than save herself, at the expense of seeing them made vain, idle and headstrong : but my father could not be prevailed upon to take her from his mother, so she was obliged to submit.

“ At the death of my grandmother, she returned home ; but, as my poor mother feared, she found her extremely violent and unmanageable in her temper. She was put to school, but shewed no disposition to attend to any thing that was serious and useful. As she grew up, she became excessively vain of her person, which, unfortunately for her, was remarkably handsome. All the little skill and abilities she had were employed in dressing herself out, as she thought, to the best advantage ; and she was constantly teasing my father and mother for better clothes than they could afford to give her : and when, by constant importunity, she had prevailed on them to give her a light

calico gown and a white muslin bonnet and handkerchief, she expressed a strong desire to go to a dance, which was made by a number of servants in the neighbourhood, at a public house in our village. To this my mother steadily refused her consent, because she knew that such places may justly be called the road to ruin. Instead of hearkening to my mother's reasons for her refusal, Anne cried violently, and uttered such language as no child ought ever to use to a parent. Disputes of this kind often happened; so often, that our cottage, which used to be so quiet and comfortable, became an almost constant scene of noise and wrangling; for when my sister was not disputing with my father and mother, she was generally tyrannizing over me, or quarrelling with my brothers. Frequently have I heard my parents lament and say, they feared Anne would never come to any good, and sadly did my father accuse himself, for having left her so long with my grandmother.

"When she was about seventeen years of age, they became very anxious to get her into some sober, regular family, as a servant; although it was difficult to say what situation she was likely to fill, with any credit to herself, or comfort to her employer. While they were inquiring for some place in which she would have a tolerable chance of giving satisfaction, a lady, who lived in the town of Monmouth, and was on a visit in the family of a neighbouring gentleman, happening to see her, and being struck with her appearance, asked her some questions, which she answered in a manner that added to her liking. She inquired about her family, and hearing that her parents were remarkably honest, sober and industrious, and burdened with a large family, she called on my mother and offered to take Anne into her service. Knowing that she was a lady of large fortune, and related to the squire of our parish, my mother thanked her very gratefully, and said, she should be most happy to place her daughter in her service; 'but,' added she, 'I must not return your kindness, Madam, by deceiving you, in respect

to Anne's temper, which is far from what I wish; I fear, when you are acquainted with her faults, your intention will change, but it is my duty to tell you the truth, notwithstanding.' She then, not without shedding tears, gave her a faithful account of my sister's disposition, and concluded by saying, she had had more trouble and uneasiness with her, than with her four other children together.

"The lady listened with a careless air to what my mother said, and then replied, 'you see these trifles in too serious a light, my good woman. If your daughter is a little vain of her person, and rather fonder of pleasure than you at present are, it is not very extraordinary at her age: as she grows older she will become wiser; and I have no doubt but that she will make it her study to please me.'

"Anne, who was present, curtsied, and assured her she would do every thing in her power to gain her favour: to which the lady answered, 'that is all I require. and I have no doubt but you will be a good girl and follow my directions in every thing.'

"This speech was followed by further promises of obedience and good behaviour, with which she was so perfectly satisfied, that she ordered my sister to come to the Hall the very next day.

"She was no sooner gone, than Anne broke out into the most rapturous expressions of delight at the thought of being freed from the restraints under which she then lived, of wearing fine clothes. and taking up her abode in a fine house. She paid no attention to the good advice which my mother, in the tenderest manner, and with tears, offered her; but, on the contrary, reproached her for having, as she expressed it, tried to rob her of the lady's good opinion, by giving her such a shameful character.

"Although my mother greatly feared this was not the kind of mistress who was likely to be of real use to Anne, yet was she so weary of continually struggling and contesting with her, that she endeavoured to divert her thoughts from the many dangers to which she

rash and vain a girl was likely to be exposed, and fix them upon the comfort her husband, her children and herself would probably enjoy, when freed from the constant vexation which her obstinate, violent temper occasioned them.

"Having clothed my sister as well as she could, partly out of her own slender stock of necessaries, she the next day accompanied her to the Hall, from whence Anne, in about a week, attended her lady to Monmouth, and soon after removed with her, as my parents learnt, by a short letter, which was the only one they ever received from her: and many years passed before I saw or heard from her again; in what state I then found her you shall presently hear.

"After my sister was gone, our little family became truly comfortable; all the wranglings and quarrels, which she had so often caused, being at an end. My two eldest brothers hired themselves to a rich farmer in the neighbourhood, who in a short time made James his bailiff, which situation he had held about four years, when he was taken from this world by a fever, to the great regret of his master, who immediately put my second brother in his place. Richard, who was a sensible, prudent young man, had, by strict economy, although he never wronged his employer of a farthing, in about fifteen years, saved money enough to enable him to take a small farm; and his generous master, as a reward for his fidelity, made him a present of a fine cow, a pig and six sheep, of a particularly good kind, all which, together with the stock he himself purchased, by his care and good management, increased and prospered.

"John, my youngest brother, was put apprentice to a shoemaker, and, when his time was out, continued to work with him, and behaved so well, that his master, growing old and infirm, took him into partnership.

"Having only myself, then twelve years old, to maintain, my parents permitted me to take my turn at school, to my great joy; for I wished much to learn to read and work. They were rendered happy by the

good conduct of their sons, but lived not to lament the death of the oldest, nor to rejoice in the prosperity of the other two; for they had been settled in their places only a few months when my good father died very suddenly, and my mother, whose health had never been strong, was, in less than six months after, taken so dangerously ill that I was obliged to leave off going to school and stay at home to nurse her. Many of our neighbours, both rich and poor, were very kind to her, and my good brothers, James and Richard, denied themselves every thing that they might send their earnings to her. Poor John had no money to send; but the good character which every body gave him and her two eldest sons, soothed her pains and cheered her in her last hours. Thus I have the satisfaction of knowing that my dear mother had many comforts and alleviations under her sufferings; but her days were accomplished: it was not the will of Him, 'in whose hand our breath is,' that she should longer continue in this world of trial. She supported her long and painful illness with exemplary patience, and died with a resignation and composure, which impressed my young mind in a manner never to be forgotten.

"My mother had a half-sister, considerably older than herself, whom she had not seen for many years; having, from the time she first went to service, lived several miles distant from her. A few days before the death of my dear parent, she came to our house, and expressed great sorrow and disappointment at finding my father dead and my mother so ill.

"She told us that she kept a shop in the city of Gloucester, and hearing that our family were all industrious and doing well, she had resolved to come and see us. She further informed us that she began business with some money which was left her by an uncle, and that she was then worth a great deal more than when she first opened her shop; adding, that if my father had left any money behind him, or my brothers had saved any part of their wages, she would take it and pay good interest for it, which would be a great advan-

tage to us, as it was difficult to find places where money could safely be put.

"My mother thanked her for what she thought her kind offer, but said that the largeness of his family, together with the dearness of all the necessaries of life, had put it out of her husband's power to save any thing; as it required all his industry and sobriety to support his children in health and comfort, and give them a little schooling; that as for her sons, they had so kindly supported her during her long illness, that she was sure it must have cost them all they could possibly spare out of their wages, and that the furniture of their little habitation would be all they would be worth after her death.

"My aunt seemed very sorry for my mother's illness, and told her that if she did not recover she would, after her death, take me to live with her, a promise for which my dear parent felt very grateful, and thanked her with many tears, telling her she had removed the only weight which lay heavy at her heart, the thought of leaving her poor little girl in a wide and wicked world, without any friend, who had the power to instruct and protect her. 'Yet,' continued the dear saint, clasping her hands, and looking upward, with faith and love expressed in her pale countenance, 'why should I say so? Is she not in the hands of that all powerful and all merciful Being who has said, *leave thy fatherless children to me?*'

"My good brothers joined to pay all the expenses of their dear mother's funeral, after which they sold the furniture of our cottage, which, as we had all kinds of necessaries, and all good and comfortable, brought upwards of thirty pounds. This money they gave to my aunt, taking her note of hand, and telling her that if she would be kind to me, and bring me up in her business, they did not desire to receive any interest for it. This she readily promised, adding that she looked upon my brothers and myself as her children, and that at her death all she got by her business should come amongst us.

"The day after the sale I took a tender leave of my dear brothers, and, together with my aunt, got upon the top of a coach, which conveyed us the same day to Gloucester. We were set down at an inn, from whence we proceeded to my aunt's house, which was in a very narrow street in the middle of the city. She was what is called a broker, or one who buys and sells second hand furniture.

"Upon entering the shop, which was full of chairs, tables, looking-glasses, and such kind of things, she was met by a man and woman, who appeared to be as much at home as herself, and who, she told me, were Mr. and Mrs. Jones, her partners. We all went into a kitchen, behind the shop, the sight of which gave me the most gloomy, uncomfortable feelings: it was large, low, dark and very dirty, and almost as full of old furniture as the shop. The unpleasant looks of the man and woman, together with the dismal appearance of every thing around me, struck so forcibly upon my heart, that I burst into tears. My aunt chid me severely; the woman called me 'a little fool,' and the man said, 'oh! it is a strange place, to-morrow we'll set her to work, and then she'll have no time for crying.'

"To work I was accordingly the next day set.—The house was old and large: in the upper part of it several families lived, whom we never saw, but as they passed up and down the common stairs; but those stairs, which were constantly dirtied by the feet of so many people, together with the rooms which belonged to my aunt and her partners, I found I was required to keep clean, and that it would, likewise, be my business, to go upon all the errands, and assist, as far as I was able, in preparing their meals.

"This was not what I expected, as my aunt had promised my brothers that she would teach me her business, and treat me in all respects as her own child. Yet I should have patiently submitted to her will, and to the utmost of my power have followed her directions, had I been treated with any tolerable degree of kindness; but this was by no means the case. My

aunt's temper was harsh and violent, and that of her partners equally so. They often quarrelled and disputed with each other, and to me they never spoke, but in the voice of command or anger. I was driven about from morning till night, first by one, then by another of them, being scarcely allowed time for necessary food or sleep: and what was far worse, being often sworn at, and called by strange bad names, threatened and terrified, so that my spirits, which were naturally high, quite sunk, and my life became a burden to me.

“Even Sunday, that happy day upon which I had always been accustomed to be dressed quite clean, and to go with my father and mother to our place of worship, twice at least, now brought me neither rest, cheerfulness nor instruction. My aunt and her partners lay in bed much later on that day than any other; something which they thought nice, was always provided for dinner, and myself, with either my aunt or Mrs. Jones, were employed all the morning in cooking it. In the afternoon they either went out, in which case I was left at home alone, to take care of the house and prepare supper, or three or four men came to smoke and drink punch, and sometimes as many women, to drink tea; whichever it was, my business was to wait and tend upon them, and I was often obliged to sit up alone, till one or two o'clock, indeed I could seldom get to bed before eleven or twelve.

“In a few months these late hours, together with the want of fresh air, to which I had always been accustomed, and constant labour and fretting, began visibly to affect my health; my appetite failed, and I became pale and very thin; but these were not the worst consequences of my unhappy situation. I was so much afraid of my aunt and her partners, that I never broke a cup or plate, or committed the smallest mistake, without trying to conceal, or telling falsehoods in the hope of excusing it. From living so long with people who never said a prayer, read a good book, or uttered a pious or just sentiment, the good impressions

I had so happily received, began to wear fast away. I seldom thought of God, or of goodness, gave way to passion and ill-humour, entertaining for Mr. and Mrs. Jones, and still more for my aunt, the most violent hatred, often wishing it were in my power to use them as ill as they did me. In this wretched state of mind and body did I continue until I was fourteen years of age, being rather more than twelve months, hopeless of any change for the better, and every day becoming less worthy and more miserable.

"At length, I began to harbour the thought of making my escape from my aunt, and getting back to my brothers. For such a journey I was, indeed, very ill prepared; I had few clothes, not one farthing of money, and my strength was much diminished; yet, upon this project did my mind dwell almost day and night, and I resolved to put it in execution, although I knew of no means but begging my way to Monmouth.

"After much vain consideration, I resolved to leave Gloucester, on the following Sunday afternoon, when I expected to be left in care of the house, knowing that my aunt and her partners were to walk to a tea house, at some distance in the country. The only leisure time I was ever allowed, was while the family were at dinner, during which time I was required to sit in the shop, which was divided from the kitchen by a dark, narrow passage, that I might call one of them, if any customer happened to come.

"Two days before my intended flight, I had just sat down in my usual place, and was beginning to think over my projected journey, when a lady, about thirty-five years of age, passing slowly by, suddenly stopped, to look at an easy chair, which stood near the door. Having viewed it for some moments, she turned into the shop. I ran immediately to call Mr. Jones. In a little time the lady purchased the chair, for which she agreed to give a guinea and a half, and taking out of her pocket a red morocco purse, she opened it, saying, 'here is a five pound bank note, can you give me change?'

This Mr. Jones immediately did; and the lady, having directed him where to send the chair, quitted the shop.

"As soon as she was gone, he returned to his dinner, and I was again sitting down, when my attention was caught by the sight of the purse out of which the lady had taken the bank-note, lying before me, upon the floor. I eagerly opened, and found that it contained, not the change which Mr. Jones had given her, she having put that loose into her pocket, but two notes, of the same value as the one he had received from her.

"My joy, at this discovery, was not to be described. 'Yes,' I inwardly exclaimed, 'with these I shall easily perform my journey. I shall fly from this hated place: I will go to my dear brothers.' Scarcely had this thought passed through my mind, when others of the most bitter kind succeeded. My conscience told me that the notes were not my own; that I knew to whom they belonged, and that it was my duty to return them to their rightful owner. I have already said, that my good principles were greatly weakened, but they were not wholly destroyed. My struggle between honesty, and the strong desire to keep what I thought would be so very useful to me, was violent, and I greatly fear I should have put the purse into my pocket, which had I done, I had probably been lost to every hope of honesty, or comfort, in this world, when the thought, most fortunately, occurred to me, that it would be very difficult to a poor young girl, like me, to get notes of such value changed, without drawing upon me the suspicion of having come dishonestly by them. This fear, joined to that of committing so wicked an action, determined me instantly to follow the lady, and restore her property to her. This resolution was confirmed by the hope that she would give me something in return for the purse, which I might use without danger, and which might enable me to pursue the journey, upon which my whole heart was set, with some degree of safety and convenience.

"No sooner had I taken this resolution, than I darted out of the shop, fearful lest the lady should be gone

too far from me to overtake her. I had not run more than two or three hundred yards before, to my great joy, I saw her speaking to a young woman she had met in the street.

"Just as I came up to them, the young woman courtesied and said, 'Thank you, dear madam, for all your goodness. I will take the easy chair home with me, in which my poor mother will never recline without offering up grateful prayers for your health and happiness.' At which words she left her, and the lady walked slowly forward.

"I was so much out of breath, with haste and agitation of mind, being in a very weak state of health, that I could, upon overtaking her, only say, 'Madam, madam! have you lost any thing?'

"'Not that I know of,' she replied, looking at me with some surprise.

"'Yes you have,' I answered, 'is not this purse yours?'

"'It is,' said the lady, 'where did you find it?' I told her; upon which she opened it, and seeing the notes safe, she asked me if I knew the value of those papers?

"'Yes, madam,' I replied, 'they are the same with those you gave my master; they are worth five pounds each.'

"'And had you no inclination to keep them for your own use?' asked the lady.

"'Oh yes, madam?' replied I, 'a very strong inclination, they would have made me happy.'

"'Why then did you not keep them?' asked the lady, looking earnestly in my face.

"'Because,' answered I, 'if I had kept them, I should have been a thief!'

"'You are a good girl, indeed,' exclaimed the lady, her face beaming with kindness; 'are you servant to the people who keep that shop?'

"I answered, with a sigh, that I was. 'Are you content with your situation?' asked she.

"'Oh no!' I exclaimed, 'I am very miserable.'

“ ‘Tell me,’ said she, ‘ what is the cause of your unhappiness ? You look very ill.’

“ ‘Yes,’ answered I, ‘ I am often very ill, but I dare not stay to tell you now. If I am missed out of the shop, they will scold and swear at me all day, and perhaps my aunt will give me no dinner, or beat me.’

“ ‘Poor child !’ said the lady, in a tone of great compassion, ‘ have you any parents ? Tell me all about your situation ; perhaps I may be able to assist you.

“ Encouraged by her kindness, and for a moment forgetting the fear I constantly felt of those with whom I lived, in as few words as possible I told her my melancholy little history ; ending with my determination to run away from my present wretched situation, and, if possible, get back to my brothers.

“ The lady considered for a moment, then looking at me, with eyes full of tenderness, she said, ‘ my poor child, such a journey, taken alone, at your age, and in your state of health, would be attended with many dangers ; and should you arrive safe at the end of it, your brothers may have quitted the places in which you left them. Something better may be thought of for you.’ Then after reflecting again for a moment, ‘ will you,’ said she, ‘ come and live with me?’

“ Never shall I forget the sudden rush of joy which at that moment filled my heart ; ‘ Oh yes !’ I exclaimed, ‘ I will live and die with you, I will serve you by night and by day, and follow you all over the world.

“ ‘ I hope I shall not require such proofs of your attachment,’ said the lady with a benevolent smile, ‘ I shall only expect that you will be faithful, modest, and attentive to all my directions. Go home, and be obedient to your aunt until to-morrow, when I will call and see what I can do for you : I should,’ continued she, ‘ have given you a reward in money, for your honesty in returning my purse ; but I will keep it for the purpose of clothing you, when you are, as I hope you soon will be, my servant.’ So saying she smiled upon me, at the same time gently inclining her head, and walked forward.

"I stood gazing after her, until she was quite out of sight, and then slowly returned towards my prison, quite lost in the sweet hopes and expectations which had been so newly raised in my bosom. Out of this happy waking dream I was roused, upon entering the shop, by the sight of Mr. and Mrs. Jones, and my aunt, who all at once set upon me with a torrent of reproaches, oaths and threatnings, for having dared to leave the shop in their absence. As I had certainly been guilty of a fault in so doing, I ought to have told them where I had been, and to have begged pardon. But I knew they would be very angry with me for not bringing the purse to them, which, had they been honest people, I should have done; but I knew them to be much otherwise, and that, had I taken it to them, neither the lady nor myself would ever have seen any part of its contents.

"I have already said that I had of late been in a growing habit of giving way to hatred and passion, of uttering falsehood, almost without remembering that it was a crime to do so, and of returning a part of the ill language I was constantly receiving. How thankful do I feel to my heavenly Father, for mercifully taking me out of so miserable and dangerous a situation, before I was entirely corrupted and made as wicked as those with whom I lived.

"Filled with the hope of being soon taken out of their hands, I sullenly refused to tell them where I had been, or to promise never to commit the like fault again: and upon their threatening to turn me out of the house, I told them I was resolved to leave it, as I would rather beg about the streets than live with them any longer.

"Mr. Jones threatened to horsewhip me, indeed I thought he would have done it; and my aunt was in such a rage that she gave me several violent blows; but I felt as if nothing they could say or do could make me afraid. I took a wicked pleasure in increasing their rage, particularly that of my aunt, whom I hated more than any of them.

"For that purpose I reproached her with having

cheated my brothers out of thirty pounds, under pretence of supporting me in credit and comfort and teaching me her business. This put her into such a passion that she snatched up a stool, which happened to stand by her, and was upon the point of hurling it at my head when a gentleman entered the shop.

"In a moment my aunt recovered the use of her reason; she folded her hands before her, dropped a courtesy, and with a smiling face inquired what the gentleman pleased to want. Mrs. Jones walked quietly out of the shop, telling me, in a calm voice, to follow her; and her husband went, with the greatest composure, to reach such articles as his customer inquired for.

"I have often since reflected upon this scene, which placed the inexcusableness of giving way to passion in the strongest light. People often say they cannot help going into passions; yet I never saw but the entrance of some person, whom they considered as greatly above them, one for whom they have a high respect, or from whom they expect some considerable advantage, has instantly abated their fury, if not entirely calmed it.—They know that God is always present, that he hears all the oaths, threats and falsehoods they utter, and knows all the cruel and unjust wishes and desires which they suffer their hearts to harbour. And shall not his presence check their violence? He who is the most powerful, the wisest, and the best of all beings. Shall the presence of a man stop the career of our folly, and shall we dare to disregard, to brave that of the Almighty!—But to return to my story.

"All day my aunt continued to reproach me for what she called my ingratitude and folly; often telling me she wished I was fairly off her hands, and adding, that I was a poor, weakly, spiritless thing, who would never be useful either to myself or any body else. Instead of crying and fretting as I used to do, I now felt a pleasure in saying what I knew would vex her; and I should have said much more than I did, had I not been restrained by fear. I have long been sensible that my

conduct that evening, as well as upon many other occasions during my wretched abode in my aunt's house, was extremely wrong; that in purposely provoking her to make use of such expressions, as it now shocks me to think of, I was almost as guilty as herself: and I still tremble to think how near my folly had brought me to appearing before my great and offended Judge, in a state most unfit to enter into his awful presence: having not only the weight of my own habitual offences on my head, but the dreadful one of having, by my passionate provocations, caused a rash, unprincipled woman to commit a murder. It is most dreadful to do any thing which we know to be wrong and offensive to our Creator, and nothing can be more so than intentionally causing a fellow-creature to sin.

"I could not sleep during any part of the following night; my mind was agitated between hope and fear: the hope of being released from my present wretched situation, and the fear of being disappointed: something I thought might happen to the lady, she might be taken ill and die that very night: she might be obliged to go out of town upon some urgent business, and so forget me; she might, upon farther consideration, change her generous intentions towards me; nay, it was even possible she might only flatter me with a hope of being taken into her service, as an excuse for not giving me any thing for restoring her purse. The last thought, however, I rejected, as unlikely in the highest degree: the respectability of her appearance, the manner in which she had spoken to me, and the benevolence of her countenance, removed every apprehension of this kind.

"In the morning I arose with the dawn, and collecting all my small stock of clothes, made them into a bundle, that I might be ready, at a moment's notice, should the lady come and offer to take me home with her.

"During the early part of the day, I was constantly peeping into the shop, and my heart beat violently whenever I heard any one enter it. At last, as I was assisting my aunt to prepare dinner in the kitchen, Mr.

Jones came to the door, and told her that a lady desired to speak with her. Unperceived, I followed her to the end of the passage, which divided the kitchen from the shop; whereupon looking in, to my inexpressible joy, I beheld the lady. At first all my feelings were a tumult of delight; this quickly changed to the most alarming fears, lest my aunt should refuse to part with me, and the lady go away and leave me. Almost breathless, I listened, and heard her ask my aunt, if she had not a niece living with her, who was much out of health?

“‘Yes,’ replied my aunt, ‘she is a poor, weakly thing, who gives me more trouble, than her service is worth.’

“‘Then,’ replied the lady, ‘you would, perhaps, be glad to part with her, particularly to one who is likely to take care of her, and afford her an opportunity of recovering her health.’

“‘As to that,’ answered my aunt, ‘she does what I want, well enough; and as I have taken her under my care, I should not chuse to part with her.’

“‘But,’ said the lady, ‘if you can provide better for her than by keeping her yourself, you will by parting with her more perfectly fulfil your duty towards her. This part of the town is very close, and seems not to agree with her. I live in the country, and in my house she will probably recover her health.’

“‘Surely,’ cried my aunt, ‘she may live where I do; and pray what do you know of her? and why should you care whether she be sick or well? ‘tis pity but every body would mind their own business, they would find enough to do, without meddling with what does not concern them.’

“‘Common humanity,’ answered the lady, without appearing to notice her loud tone and insolent manner of speaking, ‘should make every one feel concerned for those who are in want of necessaries, and nothing is more necessary to our well-being in this world, than a tolerable state of health, particularly to those who have their bread to earn by their labour. I saw your niece

yesterday, and from her looks I am certain, that unless very great care is taken of her; she will not long have the power to work for you or any body else. All constitutions are not equally able to bear close situations : I plainly perceive that if your niece remains much longer with you, she will become a great trouble and expence to you : I live in the country, where I am to-morrow going ; I will take her with me, if you will consent : and I have no doubt, but that, in a few months, her health will be restored. As for any wages,' continued she, 'that you may owe her, I do not regard them, and you are welcome to keep any clothes she may have, to give to your next servant.'

" My aunt answered, that she could afford to clothe and pay her servants without her assistance ; but added, 'if you have a fancy to the girl, e'en take her ;' so saying, she called me with all her might. I was not long in obeying the welcome summons. 'Here, here is a lady who has taken a liking to you, and much good may you do her. Go,' continued she, 'wash your hands and face, and put on your bonnet. I shall be right glad to be rid of you before you are a farther expence and plague to me.'

" I ran to do what I was ordered, and returned in a moment with my little bundle under my arm.

" 'What have you got there !' thundered out my aunt ; 'are you about to rob me before you go.'

" I answered that I had only got my clothes, and that if she chose it I would open the bundle and shew her what it contained ; upon which the lady, with great calmness and dignity, bade me put the parcel down, saying she did not wish me to bring any thing away with me. She then desired me to go and wish my aunt health and happiness before I left her ; in obedience to which order I was moving, though somewhat unwilling, toward her, when she stepped forward and rudely pushed me towards the door, saying, 'none of your speeches ! I know you are glad at your heart to leave me, but I hope you will live to repent and wish yourself here again.'

“ ‘When you are calm,’ said the lady, ‘you will not, I hope, wish your niece so ill; on the contrary, I trust it will always be a comfort to you to reflect that she is fallen into good hands, and placed with one who will provide for all her reasonable wants, and endeavour to teach her her duty. And for your own sake, my good woman,’ continued she, ‘I entreat you to remember that this world will not last for ever, but that, in a few years, they who live the longest must appear before that awful Judge, who knows not only our words and actions; but the very thoughts of our hearts, and who will reward or punish every one exactly in proportion to the good or evil he hath endeavoured to do in this world.’

“ ‘It is nothing to you how I live,’ answered my aunt, half muttering to herself. ‘I suppose you are not to answer for me.’ ‘No, certainly,’ replied the lady, ‘every one must answer for himself; the sins of a multitude will not excuse one of your’s, nor will the righteousness of all the good people who ever were born avail you any thing; by your own conduct you must stand or fall: but if I had not given you my opinion, and, as far as it is in my power, warned you of the danger you appear to me to be in, I should have neglected what I think a very serious duty.’ So saying, she turned to an elderly looking woman, who stood unobserved by me, at the shop door, and said, ‘Martha, take this child home. I have a few calls to make and shall be with you by three o’clock.’

“ Mrs. Martha accordingly took me by the hand, and I left the house, in which I had been so truly unhappy, with a light heart. We soon came to the house of a respectable tradesman, in a street at a considerable distance from that in which my aunt lived, where I found that Mrs. Gray, for that was the name of my dear benefactress, lodged.

“ Mrs. Martha told me that her mistress was one of the best women in the world, always doing good to one person or another; that she had about a month before come to Gloucester upon particular business, and was

to return to the neighbourhood of Bristol, where she usually lived, the very next day, and to which place she had resolved to take me with her.

"A little before three o'clock Mrs. Gray came home, and, in a manner the most kind, gave me a complete change of neat plain clothes, which she had provided for me, saying I should make every thing for myself which I farther stood in need of. When dinner was ready, I assisted Martha to lay the cloth and wait : my dear mistress saying, she wished me immediately to begin to learn to do whatever would make me useful ; adding, " I hope, Martha, Elenor will be a good girl, and prove a comfortable assistant to you ; your increasing infirmities require help. I will teach her all I know which is likely to be useful to her, and I have no doubt but you will act towards her in the same manner."

"Martha answered, coldly, that she should be glad to teach me what she could, provided I would be attentive. ' I hope,' added she, ' she has nothing of her aunt's temper about her. Indeed, madam, I wonder how you bore that woman's insolence ; for my part, I could hardly keep my hands from her.

"Would her violence, answered Mrs. Gray, ' have proved any excuse for mine. On the contrary, as I have probably been better taught than she has, I should have been guilty of a greater fault, for ' where much is given, much will be required.' Besides, it is very wrong for any one to answer passionate people in their own way ; by so doing, you not only act as wrong as they do, but, by adding to their violence, increase their guilt, and of course your own ; for as there is nothing more worthy of a Christian than endeavouring to turn the unrighteous from the evil of their ways, so is there nothing more truly wicked than being knowingly the cause of another's doing or speaking any thing which has been forbidden by the Almighty.

"These words, which seemed to reproach me for the frequent fits of violence and ill temper, to which I had for some time past given away, and, particularly,

for my late provoking behaviour to my aunt, strongly impressed my mind, and laid the foundation for the conquest of my naturally warm temper, a conquest, which, by the blessing of God upon my dear mistress's instructions and my own efforts, I have in a great measure obtained.

"On the following morning, a chaise drove to the door of the house in which my dear mistress lodged; into which I followed her and Mrs. Martha, with feelings of delight and thankfulness which it is difficult to describe. On the evening of the same day we arrived in this village, where I have lived ever since, and where I hope to pass the short remnant of my life.

Nay do not sigh, my dear Fanny, its termination will not be hastened by our talking about it; and as death must one day be the lot of all, happy are they who can think and speak of it without terror.

"I have often pointed out to you the house, now inhabited by Mr. Wilson, where Mrs. Gray formerly lived. In the course of our journey, I found that Martha was distantly related to her mistress and had lived with her many years, during which time she had been treated by her with uncommon condescension and kindness.

"Upon our entering her house, she said, 'my good Martha, I hope your young assistant will prove a great comfort and help to your declining age; and I expect, Elenor, that you will observe her directions in every thing, and endeavour to make yourself useful and agreeable to her. I shall, myself, give you regular lessons, in reading, writing, accompts and needlework, and if you do your own part, I trust you will soon become an excellent servant, qualified to fill a place of business and trust, in which case I shall not fail to recommend you.'

"With a grateful heart, I thanked her for her goodness, and with great sincerity assured her, that my whole study should be to render myself useful to her, and that I would, to the best of my power, endeavour

to do every thing which either she or Mrs. Martha would have the goodness to teach me.

"That," replied my dear mistress, 'is all I require. I only desire you to be a true friend to yourself, to act in such a manner as shall be most likely to secure your comfort in this world, and certainly ensure to you everlasting happiness in that which is to come. Always remember, that this can only be done by constantly and resolutely performing your duty. Never forget that God sees you every moment, by day and by night; that though, by pretending to honesty and goodness, you may for a time, impose upon your fellow creatures, you cannot, for a moment deceive God; and that he will reward or punish you, exactly in proportion to the good or evil you have endeavoured to do. They who are the most good in this world, will be the most happy in the next; and they who are the most wicked, will be the most severely punished."

"Whilst Mrs. Gray was speaking, I thought Martha looked upon me with a jealous eye, as if she feared that I should become her rival, in the favour of her indulgent mistress. This suspicion was soon confirmed by her whole behaviour. Although a skilful and honest servant, and much attached to her lady over whom she possessed considerable influence; she had many faults. Her temper was not naturally good, and the increasing infirmities of age, added to a rheumatic disorder, which gave her much pain, contributed to render it worse; besides this, she was so extremely jealous, that every mark of kindness which I received from my mistress, increased her ill-humor.

"At first I was far from bearing her peevish unreasonableness, as I ought to have done; but Mrs. Gray, with the most unwearied kindness, endeavoured to convince me, that I ought rather to pity than resent her ill-humour; representing, that the task of instructing an ignorant girl like myself, was very fatiguing, and extremely trying to the temper, especially of one advanced in years, and infirm in health, like poor Martha. She begged me to put myself in her place; an ex-

cellent method, for whilst we do so we cannot err very much in our conduct towards others, if we regulate it by what we then feel to be right. But although she found so many excuses for Martha's impatience towards me, she never betrayed any herself, but, on the contrary, in the lessons which she, according to her promise, gave me, in reading, writing, accompts and needle-work, she instructed me with such gentleness, listened to my remarks, and answered my questions with such kindness, that I found no hours so happy as those I spent with her in this manner, and I look back upon them with a mixture of delight and tender regret, which makes the remembrance sweet.

" Her kind admonitions were not lost upon me: I soon began to see every thing in a juster light, and as she had expressed it, rather to pity than resent Martha's ill-humor. This feeling having once taken possession of my heart, it naturally followed that I should endeavour, to the best of my power, to oblige and to avoid irritating her. Although she continued very jealous of Mrs. Gray's increasing fondness for me, and had always a long fit of ill temper, after every little present I received from her, yet as I was very useful and obliging to her, and bore her cross unreasonable humours patiently, they occurred much seldomer, and remembering what my dear mistress had formerly said to me upon this subject, I blessed God for enabling me, by subduing my own temper, to improve hers.

" Every Sunday I was in the habit of walking with Mrs. Gray to Bristol, if the weather was fine; when it was otherwise, she always hired a coach, and both Martha, who was too infirm to walk so far, and myself accompanied her thither, to attend the public worship of God. My mistress scarcely ever indulged herself with the use of a coach upon any other occasion; her income was not large, and she made so good a use of her money, that she seldom spent any upon amusement, or things which she could conveniently do without.

" Sunday was always a day of pleasure and delight,

as well as of improvement to me. My dear mistress was always in the kindest and sweetest frame of mind;—she was never otherwise than good and kind; but upon the Sabbath, I used to think she appeared more than usually so.

“Our excellent minister was a widower; he had one daughter, about my own age, whom he brought up to be as pious and actively useful as himself. Their income was not large, so that although they gave away as much money as they could possibly afford, they were often obliged to deny themselves, what was to them the highest of all gratifications, that of relieving distress, to the full extent of their wishes. Their power to give money was limited, but their desire to do good was without bounds. All who wanted advice knew where to apply for it. His amiable daughter selected twelve children of good capacities, whom she instructed twice a week at her own house in writing and accmpts, and the girls also in needle-work. She was as diligent and kind in her attention to the sick and afflicted as her father: he had trained her in the paths of virtue and usefulness, and taught her, like himself, to imitate the perfect pattern of every human excellence, which was given to the world by our great instructor, Jesus Christ.

“With this worthy father and daughter, Mrs. Gray was on terms of great intimacy. When she walked to Bristol she frequently dined at their house, at which times I was always desired to do the same. Their principal servant was a woman of respectable character and manners, who had lived with her master from the time of his marriage, and had the interest and comfort, both of himself and his daughter, as much at heart as her own.

“From Mrs. Sarah, (such was the name of this worthy woman,) I received none but the best advice and example; but this was far from being the case with the generality of those with whom I occasionally conversed. My mistress visited a few genteel families who lived in or near this village: their servants sometimes

called at her house with messages, and I was sometimes sent to theirs. By degrees I became acquainted with several young women, who dressed much smarter than myself, and with whom, as my mistress had for some time past allowed me wages, I thought myself fully upon an equality. Nothing, I imagined, gave them any advantage over me, but their dressing finer; for whilst Mrs. Gray bought my clothes, which she did until I was seventeen years of age, she never permitted me to wear any thing showy, although my dress was always very neat. As soon, therefore, as I got possessed of a few guineas, I resolved to buy myself such kind of clothes as I saw these young women wear, and had I lived with a mistress who had disregarded the true interest of her servants, I should soon have become like them in every thing:—as vain, thoughtless and extravagant in my youth, and as poor, unprincipled and wretched in my old age. But no sooner did Mrs. Gray see my new trumpery, for such my fine gown, shoes and bonnet appeared in her eyes, than she most kindly condescended to represent to me the folly and evil consequences of giving way to such inclinations as I then appeared to entertain.

“She asked me, whether I thought any worthy sensible person, our good minister, for example, or his amiable daughter, or their respectable servant, would think better of me, or speak more kindly to me, in the dress I then wore, than in the plain neat clothes I used to appear in? She asked me, whether I had observed that those young women who dressed the finest, did the best in the world; or whether, on the contrary, they were not, in general, unfaithful servants, spending every shilling they got, and valued by nobody, and if they married, poor, miserable, and too often dishonest? She asked me, whether I would rather be such a despised, wretched and guilty creature, or such a respectable, worthy, contented woman as Mrs. Sarah? ‘You may,’ said she, ‘become which you please. The vain and thoughtless seldom stop at vanity and thoughtlessness: from them they generally by degrees fall into

deceit and dishonesty. If you spend every shilling you have in useless finery, you will not be at all better satisfied with your dress than you are at present, for you will still see numbers who are finer than you, and they again are envying those who possess what they cannot obtain. Thus vanity is never to be satisfied; it keeps the mind in a constant state of uneasiness, and often leads to acts of dishonesty, which end in disgrace and ruin.

“Would mistresses often condescend thus to reason with, and watch the conduct of their servants, many a poor ignorant creature would be instructed; many a vain and thoughtless one be brought to see things with the eyes of reason and understanding. But few ladies will give themselves so much trouble. In general, provided their business be properly performed, they care not what use their servants make of their little property, never represent to them what a supply the savings of youth may afford to the wants of age, or how little real credit or respectability, in any rank of life, depends upon fine clothing, how much upon understanding, usefulness and virtuous conduct. How greatly should servants be obliged to those masters or mistresses who have the goodness to take such pains to promote their present and future welfare! Hard and insensible must that heart be, which does not feel such kindness. Mine was not, I thank God, so lost to gratitude and affection. I felt the force of all my dear mistress said. I sincerely thanked her for the kind trouble she took to place things before me in a clear and plain light, to prevent my being dazzled by worthless trifles, which, though they at first appear of little importance, often lead, by their consequences, to inconvenience, distress and guilt.

“I immediately set about altering my new clothes into plainer forms. My mind rose, as it were, above such foppery, and instead of wishing for showy dresses, I began to pride myself upon always appearing neat and clean, at the smallest expense, and keeping my clothes good as long as possible.

"Poor old Martha's rheumatic complaint now increased so much that she could scarcely do any thing; which, although I was sorry for her sufferings, was a great advantage to me, as her wish to be relieved from employments which fatigued her, induced her to teach me many things, of which, could she have done them herself with comfort, her jealous temper would have made her wish me to remain ignorant. As standing long near the fire overcame her, she taught me to cook; and as her rheumatism made ironing and plaiting painful to her, she instructed me in these likewise, and as I had a great desire to learn, I soon became as good a cook and laundress as herself. Martha being unable to walk to Bristol, I was now trusted to buy all the meat and common things which Mrs. Gray wanted from thence. As I was active and healthy, all these various employments were sources of pleasure to me, particularly as they rendered me more useful and agreeable to my dear mistress, to whom I became daily more strongly attached.

"Hitherto my temptations to do wrong, since I came to live with Mrs. Gray, had been confined to the indulgence of anger and vanity, both which, as you have heard, my dear child, I was, by her good advice, and the blessing of God upon my own efforts, enabled to surmount; but now accident threw one in my way which I can never be sufficiently thankful that I did not yield to, since, had I done so, it is impossible to say to what crimes it might have led me. Instead of being able to look to the future with humble confidence, and upon the past with grateful satisfaction, I might, had my life been spared until now, have been a guilty, miserable creature, without hope or consolation; for the path of wickedness is a downward path, and if we permit ourselves to take one step therein, the next will be more steep and slippery. Very few people suffer themselves knowingly to do one bad action, without afterwards falling into the commission of many more.

Since my foolish liking for finery had been sub-

dued, I had saved something out of every half-year's wages which I received from my mistress. It was with infinite satisfaction I saw my little treasure increase, and I looked forward with delight to the time when it would be sufficiently large to put out to interest; by which means, I should have, as it were, constantly increasing wages to receive. It is not only right, but meritorious, in the poor to be saving and desirous of laying by for the supply of future wants; but then it should be done with moderation. When our blessed Saviour instructs us not to be anxious for the morrow, the meaning, as far as it concerns us in these days is, to forbid us from setting our hearts upon the things of this world, to a degree which shall cause us to neglect those of a better, and, much more, our sacrificing our honesty or sincerity as a means of obtaining them. An over anxious desire to become rich or to improve our circumstances is as dangerous, though, to the young, not so common a temptation, as vanity and the love of pleasure. Both equally tend to the broad way which leadeth to destruction, and both are equally to be avoided.

"I was sometimes trusted by my mistress with the payment of bills. One day I had a pretty large one to discharge with her grocer, the money for which was folded in a piece of paper, together with the account. Upon looking it over in the shop, I found Mrs. Gray had, instead of one ten pound bank note, given me two, which stuck so closely together that I could scarcely part them. I took no notice of this at the time; but, having paid the grocer and taken his receipt, I put the spare note into my pocket and set out home. As I walked along I considered how rich this small sum, which Mrs. Gray would never miss, would make me. The reasons which principally induced me to restore her purse subsisted no longer; I could keep it a year or two; and then, as I was known to receive wages, my possessing such a sum would not excite any suspicion. Should my mistress, which was very unlikely, discover that she had given me two notes, I

could pretend that I had not observed it, but paid them both away ; this I knew she would not be able to disprove, and I had reason to think she would believe me at once. Thus, it appeared to me impossible that my dishonesty could ever be found out, and I felt strongly tempted to keep the note, although the consciousness of the crime I should commit in the sight of God, and the wicked return I should make for all my dear benefactress's kindness, stung me to the heart. I was still undetermined when I reached the village church-yard the sight of which brought to my mind the question, ' When I come to be laid in my grave, what good will this ill-gotten money do me ? ' My thoughts did not stop here ; I pictured to myself the day of judgment, and shuddered at the idea of appearing before our just and righteous Judge with such a crime upon my conscience. I no longer hesitated ; but, resolving to return the note, I quickened my pace, that I might not have time for further temptation. Mrs. Gray expressed herself much delighted with my honesty, and said she could never fear to trust me after such a proof of it. Her praises, the confidence she declared she placed in me, together with my own approving conscience, made me feel so happy, that, in the fulness of my heart, I ran to my own room, and upon my knees returned thanks to God for enabling me to resist the trying temptation. From that time I can safely say I never felt the least inclination to appropriate to myself what belonged to another, although, during the years which have succeeded it, I have had many opportunities of doing so without danger of detection.

" For six years I continued thus daily improving in knowledge, usefulness, and the love and practice of what is good. I was now twenty years of age, and became so good a servant, that Martha, who could with difficulty walk, enjoyed complete rest. Besides this, thanks to my dear mistress, I read well, wrote a good hand, was ready at accompts, and an excellent needlewoman. Finding that having my gowns made for me cost more money than I liked to spare, I unmade an

old one, and having cut out that which I intended to make by it, put it together by one which fitted me, and succeeded so well, that I afterwards not only made all my own, but made and altered several for Martha; and at last my mistress kindly permitted me to make her's. In the same manner I afterwards taught myself to make caps, bonnets, and other articles of dress, all which saved me a great deal of unnecessary expence at the time, and has since been of infinite use, not only to myself, but also to one whose welfare was dearer to me than my own. But I will not anticipate.

“About six months after this period, a nephew of Mrs. Gray's, her only near relation, of whom she was very fond, came with his wife and a son, about three years old, to pay her a visit. Mr. Gray was a handsome, genteel young man, but had something rather too bold and fashionable in his look and manner to suit what I considered as an appearance of prudence or goodness of heart. His wife was a vain, weak, pretty woman; but little George was one of the sweetest children I ever met with, and interested me the more from his being much out of health. Mr. Gray's father had brought him up to business, and at his death left him in circumstances to carry it on with comfort and respectability; but he was not satisfied with going on in the same safe, steady manner that his father had done, adding small sums yearly to his capital; he wanted to place himself upon a par with the first merchants in London, to gain as much money and live in as high a style as they did. He told his aunt that were his capital four times as large, he would employ it to advantage in several foreign speculations, which he said would not fail to make his fortune in a very short time. Mrs. Gray knew nothing of business, but loved her nephew, and was by him persuaded to withdraw three thousand pounds from the public funds and lend it to him. He was profuse in his acknowledgments, declaring that he doubted not soon to double the sum, and assuring his aunt that she should never suffer any inconvenience from her liberality, and the confidence she placed in him.

“ Having obtained what was the real occasion of this visit, Mr. Gray proposed to his wife returning to London, to which she, sick of the dull life she led with us, gladly agreed : but as little George had derived much benefit from the country air, she hinted a wish that he should be left behind. Mrs. Gray said she would willingly keep him, but that it would not be agreeable to her to let his maid, who was a dressy, noisy girl, remain with him ; and never having been used to children, she feared to undertake the care of him. I immediately offered to take it entirely upon myself, which I was permitted to do. Mr. Gray and his wife soon after took their leave of us ; and dear little George, of whom I was become very fond, stayed behind.

“ Soon after they had left us, poor Martha became so ill, that she was obliged to keep her bed. Her temper which had always been bad, was not improved by increasing pain : but I had acquired the habit of bearing with it, and I endeavoured, as much as I was able, to contribute to her comfort. I would willingly, as far as it was in my power, have attended to her and the child, in addition to my usual business, but my dear mistress thought that it would be more than I could do properly, and therefore resolved to hire another servant. As I was used to Martha's temper, and very fond of the child, she determined that the care of them should entirely rest upon me ; and that I should besides, wait upon her, and do her needlework ; leaving the cooking and household business to the new servant. She accordingly hired an agreeable looking young woman, who brought a very favourable character from her last place, which a short time proved she did not merit.

“ It is a very blameable kind of deception which some masters and mistresses, from a mistaken idea of good nature, are guilty of, in giving their servants false characters when they leave them ; concealing their faults, and praising them for good qualities they do not possess. It is a great injury to servants, for, as it prevents them, for a time at least, from feeling the consequences of their misconduct, it encourages them to

pursue the same course, instead of endeavouring to amend. A person who, deceived by a false character, places confidence in a bad unprincipled servant, will most probably suffer much imposition, and be shamefully robbed and cheated, before he is aware of it. No body can wish to be deceived in this manner ; I wonder, therefore, how any body can thus wilfully deceive another. But to return to my story :

“ Margaret was a very skilful servant, and appeared so lively, entertaining and good humoured, that I soon became very fond of her, and thought myself fortunate in having her for a companion, instead of poor Martha.

“ My new fellow servant and myself slept together ; dear little George partook of Mrs. Gray’s bed, and Martha had a small one, in a little chamber, within that of her indulgent mistress, which she used to occupy before I became one of the family.

“ I was now again in great danger of being drawn aside from the path of rectitude, into which my dear mistress had for so many years been endeavouring to lead me, and which I had found so delightful. No sooner did my fellow servant perceive she had gained an influence over my mind, than she began artfully to insinuate that Mrs. Gray, although a very good woman, was much too strict about trifles. She said it was cruel to deny a young girl such pleasures as others enjoyed ; and even went so far as to say, there was no harm in enjoying them secretly, provided we neglected no part of our work for that purpose.

“ Had she said all this at once, it would have opened my eyes to her character, and have preserved me from any danger of being corrupted by her : but it is difficult to convey an idea of the artful manner in which she went on, step by step, mingling flattery and ridicule with her arguments, and giving such tempting descriptions of those pleasures, of which she wanted to persuade me to partake, that it was scarcely possible for a lively young woman of one and twenty, as I then was, to listen to her, without feeling a wish to do so.

As my wishes became stronger, my opposition weakened; and when Margaret saw she had worked me up to the state of mind she desired, she proposed taking me to a dance, at a public house in the village, that night, after Mrs. Gray should be gone to bed. I was startled at this proposal, but my wicked fellow servant had already made me wish to go, and half by persuasion, half by ridicule, she at length overruled my scruples, and I consented. From this you may judge, my dear Fanny, what a dangerous thing an artful, unprincipled fellow servant is."

"Dangerous indeed," answered Fanny, "I am glad I am not likely to be exposed to such danger, by going into service."

"Ah, my child," said Mrs. Williams, shaking her head, "if you imagine, that, because you are not likely to go into service, you will be preserved from the danger of meeting with artful and unprincipled companions, you are deceived. In all classes, from the lowest to the highest, there are people as wicked as Margaret, and those who are so themselves, are always desirous to corrupt others."

"But," said Fanny, "I will never keep up an acquaintance with any one whom you and my parents do not approve, and then I shall be perfectly safe."

"You judge rightly, and your resolution is a very proper one," said Mrs. Williams; "but remember there is very little probability that you will not, for many years, be left to your own guidance, as it is very unlikely you will not survive both your parents and myself. Make the most then, my dearest girl, of the advantages our advice may afford you, whilst you are so happy as to possess it, that should you be deprived of it, you may have laid up such a store of wisdom, prudence, and virtuous principles, as may enable you to conduct yourself as those who most loved you, would have wished."

"Oh, my dear aunt," exclaimed Fanny, rising and embracing Mrs. Williams, with tears in her eyes, "I shall be more inexcusable than any body, if I do not

make a good woman, for how few have such friends as I am blessed with."

Mrs. Williams folded the amiable girl to her bosom, and a short silence succeeded, after which she continued her story, as follows :

"Not satisfied with my clothes Margaret made me put on some of her finery ; but far from being pleased with my appearance when I looked at myself in the glass, I thought I so much resembled the painted Jezebel of the scriptures, that I could hardly be persuaded to keep them on. As soon as I entered the room, several men gathered round me, and began to pay me foolish compliments ; but this, instead of giving me pleasure, only confused and abashed me. I was both shocked and surprised to see Margaret, whom I had hitherto believed to be a modest young woman, talking and laughing with them, and suffering them to take what I considered as very improper liberties with her. To one young man, in particular, her behaviour was so extremely unbecoming, that I could not help remonstrating with her upon it, in a low voice ; but she only laughed, called me a prude, and desired me to keep my sermons to myself. The company consisted chiefly of the servants of the neighbourhood, who all seemed to enjoy themselves very much, which was far from being the case with me ; for besides that the conversation I heard was extremely disagreeable to me, the consciousness that I was deceiving my mistress, and doing what she had forbidden, effectually prevented me from enjoying any pleasure from the amusement for which I had thus sacrificed my duty.

"After dancing for some hours we returned home ; but for no inducement would I pass such another night as that which followed my act of disobedience. Instead of falling into a sweet and refreshing sleep as I used to do, and awaking cheerful and happy, I lay sighing, weeping, and lamenting the fault I had been led into ; and as soon as Margaret opened her eyes the next morning, I began to tell her what I had suffered, protesting that I would not for the world go out secret-

ly, or disobey and deceive my mistress again, and earnestly entreated her to make the same resolution. At first she only ridiculed me, but finding me determined, she changed her tone, and said, in a threatening manner, 'for yourself you may do as you please, but mind what I say, Elenor, if you betray me you shall repent it.'

" 'I can never suffer so much from a right action,' replied I, 'as I have done from a wrong one. It is not only my duty not to deceive my mistress myself, but, if possible, to prevent any one else from doing so; therefore I give you fair warning, that if you ever again go out at night, or do any thing she has forbidden, I will inform her.'

" 'Just as you please,' said Margaret, in a violent passion, 'just as you please,' and I too give you fair warning, that if you get me turned away, I'll ruin your character.'

" 'That,' replied I coolly, 'is more easily said than done; for as I hope for the future always to act uprightly, and never to do any thing I fear to have known, I can have little reason to dread any of your falsehoods.'

" Being by this time dressed, I went down stairs and set about my work. The resolution I had formed, made my mind a little easier, though I was still very unhappy, for I knew it was my duty to confess my fault to Mrs. Gray, which I felt great reluctance to do. My mistress spoke to me with her usual kindness, but I could not look her in the face; and when in the evening she called Margaret and myself into the parlour to read, as it was her custom frequently to do, I, for the first time, felt unwilling to obey the summons. The chapter she selected was not calculated to reconcile me to myself; it was the sixth of Ephesians. The whole affected me deeply; but when I came to that part, where servants are commanded to be obedient to their masters, 'not with eye service, as men pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,' they seemed to apply so forcibly to me, that

my voice faltered, I could proceed no further, but burst into tears, and upon Mrs. Gray's tenderly inquiring what was the matter. I confessed the whole affair, as far as it related to myself, but mentioned nothing about Margaret. Mrs. Gray talked very seriously to me for some time, and concluded by saying, she hoped and believed, from my honest confession and the sorrow I appeared to feel for my fault, it would never be repeated.

"Whilst I was speaking Margaret's countenance underwent so many changes as to excite Mrs. Gray's suspicions, but, upon being asked whether she had likewise gone to the dance, she answered, 'No, Madam, I did not: Elenor never asked me to go with her.'

"Mrs. Gray shook her head, saying, 'For your sake, much more than my own, I wish you may speak the truth, although I fear you do not.' Then turning to me, 'remember, Elenor,' said she, 'a servant does but half her duty, who permits others to deceive her mistress, although she does it not herself. I will not at present ask either of you,' added she, 'any more questions, because I will not tempt you to be guilty of falsehoods, but remember what I have said to you, and in future, act as you will wish you had done, when your last hour arrives.'

"I blushed deeply, and left the parlour almost as much dissatisfied with myself as ever; and Margaret finding me still more firmly resolved to tell of her, if ever she did any thing which my mistress had forbidden, treated me in the most spiteful manner; which, together with the bad opinion I had lately formed of her, so completely changed my fondness into dislike and abhorrence, that I would gladly have had poor Martha again for my companion, however ill-tempered she was, rather than one to live peaceably with whom I must make myself, in a degree, guilty of so much deceit and improper conduct, by concealing it.

"Soon after this unpleasant disturbance to my peace, poor Martha became more than usually ill, and although the best medical advice was procured for her,

she every day grew worse. I sat up with her every night during a fortnight, and had the comfort to find, contrary to my expectations, that she bore the extreme pain she now endured, with far greater patience than she had done the smaller degrees of it, which she had hitherto felt. She constantly expressed the greatest willingness to die: thanked her dear mistress for all her past goodness, and me, for the patience with which I had borne with her so long and so kindly. She frequently and earnestly besought of her Almighty Father, the pardon of all her offences; declaring her entire confidence in his infinite mercy, as promised to all penitent sinners, by his Son Jesus Christ; and thanking him for having enabled her to pass through the world, in the midst of many and great temptations, with perfect honesty. This was to her an inexpressible comfort. She had never been unfaithful to the trust reposed in her, nor the means of corrupting others.

"Soon after her death, Mr. Gray arrived. He came to fetch away his little boy. My mistress was very unwilling to part with him, for he was a sweet-tempered sensible little creature, and had so greatly engaged her affections that, as the country agreed so well with him, she wished him to have staid with her at least another year. Mr. Gray thanked her for the care she had taken of him, and praised his improved looks and manners, saying, that he should, for his own part, have been very glad to leave him longer with his aunt, but that his wife longed to see him, and being shortly to spend a month or six-weeks at a watering place, had resolved to take him with her. He told Mrs. Gray that the sum of money she had lent him, had been of great use to his business, that nothing could go on more prosperously than it did, and that he doubted not, in a few years, to be able to repay her, and yet retain in his hands a capital equal to his wishes. Before he left us, he thanked me also, for the trouble I had taken with dear little George, and offered me a considerable sum of money, but this I begged,

leave to refuse, as I knew my mistress would be offended, did she know I accepted it; and I was resolved never more to do any thing secretly, or which I thought she would not approve; besides, I so sincerely loved the dear child, that whatever I had done for him during the year he had lived with us, had been a pleasure instead of a trouble to me. And now, Martha being dead, and poor George gone, I found myself almost without business, for young and active as I then was, waiting upon, and working for my mistress, seemed a life of idleness. Whether she would have continued to have kept both me and Margaret, I know not; but if such was her intention, a circumstance happened a few days after Mr. Gray's departure, which determined her to the contrary.

"Margaret and I had lived very uncomfortably together, ever since the affair of the dance, but as she had not, to my knowledge, done any thing which was dishonest, or injurious to my mistress, or contrary to her orders, I bore her ill-nature without complaining, taking care by my good behaviour to put it out of her power to prejudice my mistress against me, as she would, I knew, gladly have done, could she have found any shadow of a fault of which to accuse me; but I did not yet know all her evil practices.

"One evening my mistress was engaged to drink tea with an acquaintance in the neighbourhood. She had not been long gone, when the same young man whom I had seen so improperly familiar with Margaret at the dance, entered, and she, who had gone up stairs a few minutes before, made her appearance, dressed out in a manner which shewed she expected his visit. After exchanging a few words in their usual free manner, she went to the pantry and brought out some cold meat, which she placed before him. I told her that giving away her mistress's provisions, was a complete robbery, that she had no right to admit any body into the house in her absence, and added, that if she did not immediately send him away, and take back the meat, I would inform Mrs. Gray both of that and

of her having been at the dance. Regardless of what I said, she drew a jug of beer, and desired the young man not to mind me; adding, 'I know she will not venture to tell of us. It is hard indeed if I may not now and then see a friend! A mighty matter to make such a fuss about.'

"I answered, that, if there was nothing wrong in it, she could have no objection to my telling the whole affair to my mistress. She bade me do it at my peril. The young man then said, I looked too sensible and good-natured to hurt a fellow-servant; to which I replied, that if I had good sense, it ought to preserve me from doing wrong; and that it would shew more real good-nature to check and expose the first approaches to dishonesty and wickedness in another, than by concealing to encourage them, and so become, perhaps, the principal cause of a fellow-creature's disgrace and ruin. I then left them, and going into my own room, remained there until Mrs. Gray's return; when, in Margaret's presence, I told her all which had happened during that evening, and likewise, the part which Margaret had acted in inducing me to commit the fault I had some time before acknowledged to her. Mrs. Gray said, she was shocked, though not surprised at this account. 'Her looks,' added she, 'whilst you, Elenor, were owning to me that you had been at the dance, led me to believe her also guilty, although she denied it, and having conceived this idea, I was resolved to watch her narrowly, and should sooner or later have found her out; and you may conceive whether I should then have had as good an opinion of you, as I have now.'

"She then talked to Margaret for some time in a very serious and impressive manner; after which she dismissed her, without any character. When she was gone, my mistress asked me whether I should have any objection to undertaking the whole business of my place. She said, that as she required very little ^{time} ~~ing~~ upon, she thought it would be no more ~~thold~~ ^{irre-} and comfortable employment for me; and ~~thog~~ ^{desirable,} but I had

too good an opinion of me. to believe I wished to be idle: adding, that if I accepted her offer, she would give me the same wages she had allowed to Martha. I gladly complied with this kind proposal; the advance in my wages was very agreeable to me; I knew that I was quite equal to the task I was about to undertake, and I resolved to contribute to the utmost of my power, to render my dear mistress's life, easy and comfortable.

"I soon heard from many quarters that Margaret was doing all in her power to injure my character; but this gave me no uneasiness. When people allow themselves to do a good deal that is wrong, they have occasion to fear that much will by common report be added to it; but a young woman who is perfectly modest, honest, and desirous of doing her duty, to the best of her knowledge and ability, need not fear the power of evil tongues; her life will be a daily contradiction to any malicious reports which may be raised concerning her: they will only lead people to enquire about her, and the consequence will be, that the more she is known, the more her conduct will be approved by all worthy persons. So it happened with me, and so I have constantly observed it does to every virtuous person of whom falsehoods are told. They may prevail for a short time, but truth will quickly appear, and and all the disgrace which was attempted to be thrown upon the innocent accused, will fall upon the cruel and unjust accuser.

"I believe very few human beings have enjoyed more contentment and satisfaction than I did in my new situation. It was now more than ever in my power to contribute to my dear mistress's comfort, besides which I found means of being useful in many ways to my poor neighbours. Mrs. Gray frequently gave jelly, sago and other nourishing things to the poor people when they were sick; besides sending them soup, made by slowly stewing lean pieces of meat cut ~~body~~ with onions and proper seasoning, to which ~~she did~~ she added the bones from roasted meat, well broken, and the meat, &

stewed with the other ingredients all together, she hoped would once or twice a week supply a poor family or two, with a nourishing and savoury meal. As she did not understand cookery, this used to be left to Margaret. It now became my business, and I took such pains to make the most of every thing, that the quantity of soup I made each week, was not only larger, but much better than it had ever before been. In the distribution of it, I endeavoured exactly to proportion each family's share to the number of individuals it contained, always selecting them from those who stood most in need of such relief. I likewise took such care to cook all their little sick messes in the most delicate manner, that I am sure they did double good. Add to these sources of happiness, that my wages were now so large, that as I continued to dress in the same plain manner, and to take as much care as ever of my clothes, I each year added a pretty little sum to what I had already saved; for from the first of my receiving wages, I had every year laid by something.

"About this time our worthy and much respected friend, Mr. Grant, purchased the estate on which he now lives, and came to reside at it. Mrs. Gray had some knowledge of his family, and an intimacy ensued, which was increased by his marriage with the daughter of our worthy minister, then about twenty years of age. This good gentleman undertook to keep my savings for me, which he has ever since done, constantly adding the interest to the principal when it became due; for I resolved as long as I had any other means of maintaining myself, not to touch either, unless I really wanted it, which, thank heaven! I never did."

"Were you not dull without any companion?" asked Fanny.

"If by a companion you mean a fellow-servant," replied Mrs. Williams, "both mine had been so different from what I either liked or approved, that I should have preferred remaining without one, to running the risk of having another, perhaps equally undesirable, even had my situation been a common one; but I had

many sources of improvement and happiness, which very few servants are so fortunate as to enjoy.

“Besides the great advantage of every Sunday attending my mistress to join in divine worship, I was now favoured with much more of her conversation than I had hitherto been. I had the inexpressible pleasure of perceiving that I every day became more useful and agreeable to her. By degrees, she seemed almost to have forgotten that I was her servant, and to consider me as her friend and companion; but I took care never to forget the respect which was due to her. On week days, when I had finished my work, and she was alone, she permitted me to make tea for her; after which I accompanied her, on the summer evenings, in a walk, and with her enjoyed the beautiful scenery with which this neighbourhood abounds. In the winter I used to read interesting and instructive books to her, and when she thought I appeared fatigued she would let me sit and work with her, when our conversation either turned on what we had been reading or some other equally pleasing subject, and my dear benefactress always mingled instruction with amusement, in a manner at once so sweet, so interesting, so impressive, that I was never weary of listening to her. Indeed the love, gratitude, and veneration which I felt for this excellent woman were such as no words can do justice to. I longed for some opportunity of proving my sense of the innumerable favours I had received from her. Little did I either expect or wish for such a one as occurred a few years after.”

Here the clock striking eight, Mrs. Williams reminded Fanny that her mother would expect her home, for which reason she must defer relating the remainder of her history until the next evening, when, if she could obtain permission to come again, she would bring it to a conclusion. Fanny thanked her for the amusement and instruction she had already afforded her, and, affectionately wishing her good night, took her leave.

After her young favourite was gone, Mrs. Williams,

as was her custom every night before she went to bed, read a few chapters in the Bible; then, having offered up her prayers and thanksgivings at the throne of mercy, retired to rest, her heart glowing with gratitude to God and benevolence towards her fellow-creatures.

Early the next evening Fanny returned, and tea being over, Mrs. Williams pursued her narrative as follows:

“Soon after my being established in the happy situation I have described, Mr. Gray paid his aunt another visit. He gave her a most flourishing account of his business, declaring that if he had three thousand pounds more it would set him up completely; for could he obtain that sum, in addition to what he already possessed, he had now an opportunity of becoming one of the first merchants in London, by being admitted into partnership with a man of immense property. This was all which remained of Mrs. Gray’s fortune, except what she had before lent him, and he departed not until he had prevailed so far upon her too easy and too confiding temper, as to induce her to trust him with that also. Even then I feared what would be the consequence of thus placing her all in her nephew’s hands. There was something in his look and way of talking which from the first impressed me with the idea that he was extravagant and dissipated, and the event but too well justified my opinion.

“For ten years nothing occurred to interrupt my tranquillity. My constant endeavour to please Mrs. Gray, made her love me with so truly maternal an affection, that all her joys, sorrows, hopes and fears, were communicated to me. I soon perceived that any body whom she loved might easily acquire an unbounded influence over her. She often condescended to ask my advice, and generally followed it; but far from wishing to make an improper use of her confidence, I only felt doubly anxious to deserve the happiness of possessing it. She received frequent letters and occasional visits from her nephew. He told her

that he had been very ill-used and disappointed of his hopes of the expected partnership, but that he was glad of it and likely to do better than if it had taken place. He still gave her the most encouraging accounts of his business, although I remarked that he constantly talked of future schemes for becoming rich; and when asked whether his former ones had succeeded, and if he had realised any thing, he returned evasive, unsatisfactory answers. He often pressed Mrs. Gray to visit him in London, but this, she who loved her own little quiet retreat better than any other place, declined.

“At the end of the ten happy years I have been describing, Mr. and Mrs. Grant and their family spent a month in London. In the first visit the former made Mrs. Gray after their return, I observed he looked unusually grave, and I feared had something unpleasant to communicate to her; nor was I deceived. It was not the will of her heavenly Father that she should continue to enjoy such a state of uninterrupted tranquillity and happiness. He saw fit to prove and strengthen her virtue by a severe affliction, which, although it did not immediately befall her, from that time appeared almost inevitable.

“After kindly preparing her for the unpleasant tidings he brought, Mr. Grant informed her, that during his stay in London, he had met with several people who were acquainted with her nephew; that it was the opinion of them all that he lived much beyond his income, was deeply in debt, and had lost large sums by rash, foreign speculations. He added that he had been credibly-informed, that a great part of the money he first borrowed from his worthy aunt had been appropriated to the payment of old debts.

“Mrs. Gray immediately wrote to her nephew, telling him what she had heard, and conjuring him to retrench his expenses, endeavour to retrieve his affairs, and never, in future, venture upon any rash, foreign speculations. She concluded by reminding him that his ruin would cause her own. In his answer he assur-

ed her the report was wholly false, that his circumstances were very prosperous, and begged her to make herself perfectly easy both on his account and her own. This, however, she had too great a reliance on Mr. Grant's veracity to be able to do, and in a few months her nephew's letters contained very different accounts from what they had formerly done. He no longer denied having had great losses which embarrassed him much, but mentioned a hope he had of entering into partnership with an opulent, established house, when his gains would be so great that he said he should soon more than retrieve his affairs. Mrs. Gray, who was sick of schemes and expectations, became very uneasy at this account, and I ventured to advise her to call in as much money as, should her nephew fail, would keep her from want; but to this she could not consent, 'for,' said this excellent woman, 'I have only the same right to his property as the rest of his creditors; and were I to call in my money, and he should afterwards fail, I should have defrauded them of part of their due, which I would rather work for my bread during the remainder of my life, than do.'

"I was deeply affected, and taking her hand I pressed it to my lips, exclaiming, 'no, my dearest mistress, never, whilst I have life and health, shall you be reduced to that necessity. Should you be deprived of your fortune, I will maintain you.'

"'But how will you be able?' asked Mrs. Gray, smiling, though her eyes were filled with tears.

"'You, madam, have put the means into my hands,' answered I. 'I can make gowns and other articles of dress, besides doing all kinds of plain work. I will exert all my powers to render your future life comfortable. I will take a cottage and work for hire. I doubt not but I shall get plenty of employment. In me you shall always find a faithful obedient servant, more than ever anxious to please and make you happy, and if you will give me your promise, that should the misfortune you dread befall you, you will let me put this scheme into execution, I shall feel easy.'

“ ‘Be easy then, my dear, grateful, affectionate Elenor,’ said she, embracing me; ‘I have no relations except my nephew and his family, and in the event you speak of, they will be unable to assist me. There is no one whom I love as I do you, and I will accept your kindness, as I would that of a beloved daughter; that is to say, I will live with you, and you shall maintain me, on condition that you let me do all in my power towards my own support.’

“I did not oppose her at the time, although I secretly resolved that, should such a sad change take place in her condition, she should still live in a situation as easy and comfortable, as I had the power to procure for her; for I could not endure the idea of her suffering any wants or inconveniences.

“After this conversation, Mrs. Gray wrote her nephew several letters, conjuring him to tell her the truth in regard to his affairs. At first she received evasive answers, then none whatever, and at last a letter came to her from a third person, which, having perused, she put into my hands, saying, ‘now, my dear Elenor, you may put your scheme into execution as soon as you please.’

“I turned so sick and trembled so much, that I could scarcely hold the letter, which Mrs. Gray observing, said in a cheerful tone, ‘my child, any body who saw you at this moment, would think some sudden, unforeseen misfortune had befallen us, instead of one which we have for more than twelve months been expecting.’

“Encouraged by her composure to hope things were not so bad as I had feared, I ventured to read the letter, when I found that Mr. Gray had failed for a very large sum, and together with his wife and son, had left London and gone nobody knew whither, or if any did know they would not acknowledge it. It concluded by saying, that the creditors would not receive more than two shillings in the pound. The letter dropped from my hand, I remained motionless, and had not a shower of tears come to my relief, I believe I should

have fainted. Mrs. Gray suffered them to flow for some time, without interruption, until seeing me somewhat more composed she took my hand, and said in a serious, though affectionate tone, 'my dear Elenor, this is indeed a heavy misfortune, and I feel the value of your kind sympathy: but remember, my child, it comes from the same source whence all our blessings flow. 'Shall we receive good at the hands of God, and shall we not receive evil?' Shall I, whose path through life has hitherto been so smooth and even, murmur that now, when I am drawing near to its close, it becomes more rugged and steep? Shall I forget that the glorious mansion of rest and happiness is still in view, and that although my natural relations fail to assist me in my journey to it, I have still your arm to lean upon? No, let me with humble gratitude acknowledge his goodness, who still permits me to enjoy such a blessing; and even should this last earthly prop be taken from me, I will not despair, 'for,' added she, clasping her hands, and raising her eyes, beaming with pious resignation, love, and confidence, to heaven, 'that friend who never forsakes those who obey and trust in him, will still protect me; those eyes which never sleep, will watch over, and that powerful arm, which is never withdrawn, will sustain me, until I reach that place of rest and bliss which is prepared for those who endure patiently unto the end.'

"I could only answer this dearest and best of women by my tears and embraces, yet did her serenity and resignation contribute so much to compose and strengthen my mind, that before the end of the day I called upon Mr. Grant, told him my beloved mistress's misfortune, and imparted to him my scheme, for which he commended me much more highly than I deserved; for could I ever do enough for one to whom, under Providence, I owed all my happiness here, and all my hopes of a blessed hereafter? Mr. Grant told me that the pretty little house which I now inhabit, being fortunately vacant, I should have it, and the nice garden belonging to it, rent free; and that he regretted his

fortune not being affluent enough to permit his more largely contributing to the support of his worthy friend.

"Mrs. Gray selected out of her own furniture as much as was necessary to fit up this cottage in the manner you see; and having sold the remainder, together with some plate and a few valuable trinkets which had been bequeathed her by a friend, she found herself, upon paying what few debts she owed, and receiving her dividend, worth six hundred pounds only: which small wreck of her fortune she placed in the public funds. We had a little before heard that Mr. Wilson greatly wished for a house in this village, and upon our offering, with the landlord's permission, to remove and give ours up immediately to him, he very gladly accepted the proposal.

"Upon our removal hither, which took place in a very short time after the receipt of the letter which announced Mr. Gray's failure, I begged Mrs. Grant to use her interest to procure me work, which she promised to do, and began by giving me a considerable quantity herself, and I was so fortunate as to please both her, and all to whom she had the goodness to recommend me. My dear mistress, as I still delighted to call her, insisted upon helping me, and as I perceived that her so doing rendered her mind more cheerful and satisfied, I did not object, only I took care to put such parts of our work into her hands as required least attention, and endeavoured to lead her into such conversation as I knew was most agreeable to her. I had soon more work than I could accomplish, for I made it a rule never to do any on a Sunday, and rather to decline some which was offered me, than promise to finish it sooner than I believed I could do. By my punctuality, the neatness of my work, and by always faithfully returning to their owners, all the small pieces I had to spare of the materials put into my hands, I found that none of my customers ever forsook me, and they increased so fast, that I resolved to take an apprentice. I had the offer of several, and

amongst the rest of the orphan niece of a rich farmer. Her name was Sarah Mills, she was the daughter of an unfortunate brother; he had taken her while a child to live with him, but finding that his wife, who was a selfish, ill-tempered woman, used her very unkindly, and that the girl was become exceedingly sullen and unhappy, he resolved to put her to some business, and offered to bind her to me for seven years. I had heard, that the poor child was very ill-treated; and therefore resolved to take her, in preference to any other, though I feared, from her look and manner, that her temper was greatly hurt. She came to me accordingly, and her uncle, who was glad to place her in what he thought safe hands, gave me a good premium with her. She was twelve years of age, her understanding was good, and she learned readily; but I found her temper, as I feared it would be, sullen and morose.— She came violently prejudiced against me, from the idea, that if a relation had used her so ill, I, who was a stranger, would treat her still worse. I perceived that to gain any influence over her, it was necessary first to win her affection, which was not easy, but I would not let myself be discouraged. I had known what it was to be ill-treated myself, and the remembrance of what I had suffered when I lived with my aunt filled me with compassion for poor Sarah, and made me find it less difficult to bear with her temper, and persevere in my endeavours to convince her, that instead of tyrannizing over her, I wished to act towards her as a mother. Having at length succeeded in this, the improvement of her temper became a much easier task, as one principal cause of its badness was removed. When she came to me, she was extremely ignorant, never having learned to read. This Mrs. Gry kindly undertook to teach her, which she did with so much patient sweetness, that although Sarah was at first averse to learning, she soon became fond of it, and her capacity being good, she in a short time learned both to read and write well enough to be very useful and agreeable to her. By the time she had been

with me a year, although she had at first been a great hindrance to me, from her awkwardness, she became so good an assistant, that she enabled me to take in a much larger quantity of work, although I might still have had more, could I have done it. Her temper, too, improved greatly, and she was very grateful to Mrs. Gray and myself, and much attached to us both, especially to Mrs. Gray.

“ Sarah had been with me rather more than two years, when Mrs. Gray and myself went one evening to drink tea at Mrs. Grant’s, as we were in the habit of frequently doing. Whilst we were there, a parish officer called to consult Mr. Grant on what they should do with a little girl, who had that day been sent there from Hereford. It appeared that her father, who belonged to this parish, had been dead about a year, and that her mother having married a soldier, belonging to a regiment then quartered at Hereford, had, on his being ordered away, gone with him, leaving her child without a friend or protector. The little girl’s appearance was particularly engaging, and I felt so much interested for her, that seeing Mr. Grant was at a loss what to do with her, there being no poor-house in the parish, I offered to take her as an apprentice, with half the fee I had received with Sarah, although Jane Willis, (such was her name,) being only nine years old, I had reason to expect a long time would pass before she could be of much use to me. Mr. Grant gladly accepted my offer, and telling Jane she was a fortunate little girl, he gave her some very good advice.— Having been decently clothed by the parish, she was, in a few days after, sent to me.

“ I found I was likely to have as much trouble and more anxiety with Jane than I had ever had with Sarah, although from a very different cause. So entirely had she been neglected by her unnatural mother, that she had scarcely an idea of the difference between right and wrong, truth and falsehood, and hardly seemed to know the name of her Creator. She was sensible, well-disposed, and very sweet-tempered ; but so ex-

tremely giddy and volatile, that it was difficult to make her attend to, or remember any thing. I often found it far from easy to keep my temper with her, but I remembered how patiently dear Mrs. Gray had persevered in her kind and unremitting endeavours to cure me of my many faults, and I felt that in exerting the same forbearance towards this little friendless, uninstructed child, I best proved my gratitude to heaven and my benefactress. Jane had another quality which, as she seemed likely to be very pretty, gave me much uneasiness; this was a propensity to taking sudden and violent likings to people, without any particular reason. Knowing that when she should be a few years older, this weakness would expose her to many dangers, I endeavoured to cure her of it, by teaching her as far as I was able, to view characters in a just light, and to judge of people not by their manners and appearance only, but from their actions; never failing, when, as was often the case, some person for whom she had thus rashly conceived a friendship, proved unworthy, strongly to represent the folly and danger of attaching herself to any one, whom a long intimacy had not proved to be deserving her affection. I had indeed a most difficult task to correct these two faults, both which gave me great uneasiness, and the latter would have made me really unhappy on her account, had I not perceived in her a native modesty and diffidence, which made her as she grew up, shrink from those attentions which her beauty induced many of the young men in the neighbourhood to pay her, when they had an opportunity of conversing with her; which seldom occurred, for I kept no company, and scarcely ever visited any body except Mrs. Grant, never permitting either Jane or Sarah to go to a dance, wake, or any kind of public amusement.

“Jane, notwithstanding all her faults, was of so sweet and affectionate a temper, and so entirely free from all guile or deceit, that she grew daily dearer to me. Although Mrs. Gray was very kind to her, yet Sarah, who was become an excellent girl, having been

her first, continued to be her greatest favourite ; indeed she deserved to be so, for she waited upon her with all the respectful attention of a servant, and the grateful affection of a daughter. This being the case, Jane seemed more peculiarly my charge, and her affection was from the first almost exclusively fixed on me ; whereas Sarah was more attached to Mrs. Gray, at which I, who myself loved that excellent woman so much, could not wonder. My affection for her was, if possible, increased since her misfortune. When I saw her sometimes sitting at her work, at other times reading to us, or hearing the girls read ; sometimes visiting our poor neighbours, advising, comforting and assisting them ; when I beheld her cheerful piety and resignation, I cannot describe my feelings, or how much I loved and revered her. There was only one subject upon which we ever disagreed ; this was when the interest of her six hundred pounds became due ; I wanted her to keep the whole, and use it as her own generous heart should direct ; but she never would take more than half. As I found it only distressed her to request it, I at length ceased to do so, and finding that my gains from business were sufficient to enable me to maintain my little family comfortably, and lay by a moderate sum of money every year, I resolved to use the fifteen pounds which I annually received from her, as a little fund for the relief of the distressed, and I may safely say that no money ever afforded me so much pleasure as that did.

“ About this time we sustained a heavy loss in the death of our worthy minister. To Mrs. Grant, who was the most dutiful and affectionate of daughters, this separation from her dear and revered father was indescribably painful ; and her good husband was himself too much grieved to offer her consolation : but Mrs. Gray, who always in the midst of affliction discerned the hand of divine wisdom and mercy, directing those events which caused it, although she deeply felt the loss of her much esteemed friend, was by her natural benevolence and habitual piety, enabled to administer com-

fort to the sorrowing orphan, and, by degrees, to teach her to rejoice that her beloved parent was removed from a world of, at best, very imperfect felicity, to one of bliss eternal, increasing and infinite.

"When the term of Sarah's apprenticeship was expired, she quitted me, and went to a respectable mantua-maker at Bristol, to whose business she, some years after, succeeded. Jane had yet three years remaining of her time, and was so much attached to me, that she often declared, when they should come to an end, she should prefer staying with me to going elsewhere, even, if she could get double wages. After Sarah left me, I took another apprentice named Mary Lewis, who was bound to me by her parents, who were decent, respectable people. She could work neatly, and had been brought up in habits of industry, so she never gave me any trouble, and was soon of as much use to me, as Sarah had ever been.

"One evening, soon after Mary's arrival, as we were all enjoying a walk through some beautiful fields adjoining the road leading from Bristol to the new passage, we saw a woman sitting under a tree, who looked ill, and seemed ready to faint. We approached, intending to offer her some assistance. When we were near enough to discern her features, a confused idea of something connected with my early years, took possession of my mind, but before I had time to reflect, Jane, turning suddenly pale, caught hold of my arm, exclaiming, 'Oh, Mrs. Williams, it is my mother!'

"The woman repeating the name of Williams, looked earnestly in my face, and endeavoured to rise, and Jane, whose resentment for her mother's cruel desertion, was lost in sorrow at seeing her in so deplorable a condition, ran to assist her; but, at the sight of her daughter, she started and shrank back, stung by the remembrance of her unnatural conduct towards her. Jane, the tears trickling down her cheeks, threw her arms round her neck, saying, in a voice interrupted by sobs, 'mother, will you not speak to me?'

"The poor woman, whom, notwithstanding her mis-

conduct, I could not help pitying, raised her head, looked at her daughter with a mixture of shame, remorse and tenderness, and endeavoured to speak; then quite overcome, fainted in her arms. As we were but a little way from our cottage, I ran thither for a glass of ginger wine. Thinking she might be in want of food, I put some upon a plate, and returned to the field. I found the woman recovered from her fainting fit, leaning upon Jane, who wept over her, and just as I came up was saying, 'think no more of it, dear mother, I entreat you.'

"I offered her the refreshment I had brought, which she reached out her hand to take, when looking in my face, she stopped short, with an appearance of sudden recollection, and turning to Jane, 'did I not,' said she, in a tremulous voice, 'hear you mention the name of Williams?'

"'Yes,' answered Jane, 'this dear woman's name (taking my hand,) is Elenor Williams.'

"After a moment's pause, she turned to me, and with increased agitation, said, 'tell me, I entreat you madam, are you not the daughter of James Williams, a bricklayer, who lived near Monmouth?'

"I answered 'yes.'

"'You had a sister,' added the poor woman, in a voice scarcely articulate.

"'I had indeed,' exclaimed I, eagerly, 'it is twenty five years since I have heard any tidings of her. Can you inform me?—'

"Jane's mother interrupted me by catching hold of my hand, and bursting into tears, whilst her agitation would scarcely permit her to say, 'I am she.'"

Here Fanny dropped her work, and clasping her hands, said, "she was then my grandmother, and the little friendless Jane, whom, when deserted by her unnatural parent, you fostered, instructed, loved, was my mother? I knew you had brought her up, but was ignorant that you did so without knowing her to be your niece; for my mother, although she is continually

praising you, and saying how great her obligations to you are, never mentioned that circumstance."

"I am not surprised at that," said Mrs. Williams, "it must be painful to so good and feeling a heart as hers, to speak of her mother's misconduct."

"Ah, my dearest aunt," exclaimed Fanny, throwing herself into Mrs. Williams's arms, "what might she have been but for you—what does she, and what do I, and all our family owe you!"

She was so much affected by this discovery, that Mrs. Williams, who was herself greatly moved by her grateful sensibility, and by the remembrance of the scene she had been describing, proposed that they should give themselves a little time to recover. In about a quarter of an hour, Fanny, having relieved her full heart by tears, expressed a wish to hear the remainder of her aunt's story, which that worthy woman, having tenderly embraced her, continued thus:—

"What I felt at that moment, I cannot describe. To have found my only sister in so destitute a condition would have grieved and shocked me; but to know, that she was the unnatural mother, of whose conduct I had so often thought with abhorrence, gave me a pang which nothing but the consciousness of similar guilt in myself could have exceeded.

"Having with difficulty recovered from the first shock, I begged Anne to take the refreshments I had brought her, which she did, and was so much revived by them as to be able, assisted by her daughter and myself, to reach the cottage. After she had rested some time, she informed me that she had followed her second husband to America, where, after five years service, he was killed. She was then put on board a ship bound for Dublin, from whence she had crossed to Newport, where the magistrates had supplied her with money to enable her to reach her last husband's parish, which was St. Michael's, Bristol. After crossing the new passage, she attempted to proceed on foot to that city, but being much out of health, she found herself, when within a little more than three miles of it, so ex-

tremely exhausted that she was obliged to sit down under a tree to rest. She was soon seized with a sudden faintness, and was looking anxiously round for relief when we arrived.

"This recital was accompanied by heavy complaints of the hardships and misery which she had undergone, since she went abroad. She often called herself the most unfortunate of women, never for a moment seeming to reflect that all her sufferings had been caused by her own misconduct in quitting England, when it was her duty to have staid there and availed herself of the power which Heaven had given her, when it bestowed on her a naturally strong constitution, of maintaining and taking care of her child. That she had suffered much, and that her health was greatly injured, was however evident; and she appeared so fatigued and ill that I for the present forbore to say any thing about her past behaviour. She went early to bed, and although much better the next morning, could not be prevailed upon to rise, but lay weeping and bemoaning herself in a manner which shewed me, that as in her youth, when well and happy, she had given full way to her naturally high spirits, so, now that she was unwell and unhappy, she indulged without controul in melancholy and repining; and I saw proved in her, what I had always believed to be true, that a pious and virtuous disposition is a far better support under sickness and misfortune than the strongest natural spirits, which always forsake us when most wanted, unless they are sustained by religion and a good conscience.

"On the third day Anne was really so much better, that she could no longer help acknowledging it, and, quitting her room, I received her kindly, and by asking her some particulars of her story, found an opportunity of entering upon the subject of her bad conduct, which I thought it my duty to do, however painful the task might prove. She endeavoured to vindicate herself by saying, that after the death of her first husband she had undergone so much distress, that when her second was ordered abroad, at the commencement of the

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American war, she dreaded suffering the same again; to avoid which she had accompanied him. I told her this was not in reality any excuse whatever; for being in good health, and having only one child, she might easily have maintained both her and herself in comfort, had she been industrious. 'In a few years,' added I, 'your daughter, had you endeavoured to lead her to what is right, instead of first neglecting, and afterwards abandoning her as you did, would have been able to go to service, when you would have had only yourself to maintain, which you might have done with ease and credit, in various ways, and have avoided all the guilt and misery into which you have fallen.'

Although my sister could not deny the truth of what I said, she would not acknowledge it; but after attempting some more silly excuses, she fell into a violent passion, and called me unfeeling for thus blaming, instead of pitying her. I told her that although I blamed I sincerely pitied her; but she, instead of listening to me, burst into tears, and said she wished she had not met with me, if that was the way I meant to treat her. I mildly answered that I hoped she would have no cause to regret it; that I only wished to make her sensible of her misconduct; that by repenting of it and amending those faults which led to it, she might obtain that gratifying hope of immortality, in the contemplation of which alone her griefs could ever be healed. She said she did not desire my instructions, and would quit my house as soon as she was able to proceed to Bristol. This, however, was not soon the case; for that very evening, being violently offended at something I said, she rushed out of the house, and seating herself on the grass plat in the garden, remained there until so late an hour, notwithstanding my intreaties that she would come in, that she caught a violent cold, which brought on a fever, from which she was several weeks in recovering.

"I sent for a physician to attend her, and Jane and I sat up by turns and nursed her with the utmost tenderness. Knowing that her illness had been caused by

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her own obstinacy and ill-temper, made my sister more sensible of our kindness, and as she seemed very grateful for it, I blessed God for those sufferings, which I hoped would lead to what I so earnestly desired. I hoped her gratitude for my attentions would induce her to listen more patiently to what I said, and could this once be effected, I trusted by the divine blessing, should at last convince her of her past faults, and inspire her with a wish, as far as she was able, to act better for the future. My prayers that I might succeed in my endeavours, were as fervent as my efforts were unceasing, and it pleased the Almighty to grant them. My sister became at length fully sensible of her former misconduct; but this conviction was followed by such deep grief and remorse, that I feared she would fall into a state of melancholy, which would disable her from all future exertion. This I the more seriously dreaded, as I knew her to be naturally indolent, except in the pursuit of pleasure, which, however, I was happy to perceive had lost all its dangerous charms. I earnestly represented to her that she performed but half her duty in 'ceasing to do evil,' that she ought also to 'strive to do well, and at last I succeeded in persuading her to hire herself as principal servant to Mrs. Grant. I prevailed on her to tell that worthy lady all the circumstances of her past life, at the same time assuring her of her firm resolution to act rightly through the remainder of her life, to the best of her knowledge and ability. Mrs. Grant, having praised her highly for her openness, promised her every assistance and encouragement in perfecting the good work which she had begun.

"During ten years, nothing could be more exemplary than my sister's conduct, but she never again became cheerful or happy. The remembrance of her faults preyed continually on her mind, and although gentle and obliging to every one, she was always grave and thoughtful, and often, when alone, would shed tears of remorse and anguish. Although I rejoiced at the repentance which she showed, I was grieved at the

extreme depression of her spirits, and would gladly have seen her more tranquil, could she have become so without losing the remembrance of her faults. We had many affecting conversations on the subject; one in particular made so strong an impression on my mind, that I recollect it as clearly as if it had passed only an hour ago.

"It was near the end of the last year she lived with Mrs. Grant, that, calling upon her, as I was frequently in the habit of doing, I found her more than usually depressed. I took her hand, and was beginning to use some of my old arguments to induce her to take comfort, when she interrupted me by sighing deeply and saying, 'Alas, my dear Elenor, you whose conscience is not troubled by the remembrance of crimes, but, on the contrary, cheered by that of a life of rectitude and goodness, can form no idea how heavy is the burden of remorse, how 'grievous to be borne.' When I reflect upon my past conduct from my earliest childhood, until within a few years, can I be cheerful, can I be happy? No, my sister, let my tears flow, *let my sins be ever before me*, and may the anguish I feel at the recollection of them be some little atonement.

" 'But,' said I, much affected, 'as your repentance is so sincere, and your conduct has for several years been so good, you may surely, through your heavenly Father's mercy, hope for his forgiveness and blessing, who hath said; *let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him turn unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on him; unto our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*'

" 'I hope,' answered she, 'my repentance is really sincere, and I think nothing this world could offer would induce me to relapse into those sins which I both lament and abhor; but I have no confidence in myself. Here, instead of being tempted to do wrong, I have every assistance and encouragement to do right; but should I be removed from my present situation, and placed in one where fresh temptations to evil might beset me, I know not whether I should have power to

resist them. I pray earnestly and without ceasing, that I may rather suffer the heaviest afflictions that could befall me, than that this should come to pass; but until my last hour arrives I shall neither feel secure nor dare to rejoice.'

"Soon after this affecting conversation, poor Anne's health, which had never been strong since her fever, grew visibly worse; and the physician, whom Mr. Grant sent for to attend her, pronounced her complaint to be a consumption. She soon became too ill to quit her room, but sat supported by pillows in an easy chair, her cough and difficulty of breathing rendering it painful to her to lie down. Jane or myself was almost constantly with her, and nothing could exceed her patient resignation; yet she was still grave and even in a degree melancholy. She had for four months been gradually growing worse, when the physician observed such fatal symptoms, that he thought it necessary to tell her, which he did in the most gentle, tender manner, that he had lost all hope of her recovery. Being ignorant of her story, he had attributed her habitual melancholy to fear of death; how then was he surprised to see a sweet smile overspread her pale face, and to hear her exclaim, with clasped hands and uplifted eyes, 'now then, blessed be God, my trials and temptations are over.' Then, turning to Jane and myself, she added, 'rejoice with me that nothing can now turn me aside from that path of righteousness, which I have, for the last ten years, by the divine blessing, been enabled to tread.'

"Although my poor sister had, since her reformation, become so dear to me that I was sincerely grieved by the prospect of losing her, yet I could not help like her rejoicing and blessing God that she was no longer in danger of relapsing into sin and wretchedness.

"Contrary to my expectation, she lingered several weeks longer, suffering very acute pain; but instead of repining at this, she rejoiced, as a further opportunity of proving her perfect faith and resignation to the

divine will. She spent most of her time in prayers for forgiveness of her past sins, and in grateful thanksgivings for the mercy she had experienced in being permitted to become sensible of them, and for the years in which, by penitence, and a complete reformation, she hoped in some measure to atone for those which had preceded them. She often and earnestly exhorted Jane, who seldom quitted her, unceasingly to endeavour to conquer what little yet remained of her natural giddiness and levity, endeavouring to prove to her, how much of her own guilt, and consequent misery, arose from similar faults. Every word her mother uttered sank deep into Jane's heart, and had a most salutary effect upon her naturally volatile disposition.

"At length it pleased the Almighty to release poor Anne from her sufferings, and my confidence in his mercy, leads me to hope that her sincere penitence was accepted.

"But what," said Fanny, "happened to you after my grandmother's death?"

"It was in little more than two years succeeded," replied Mrs. Williams, wiping a tear from her venerable cheek, "by that of one whom I loved so entirely, that nothing but the conviction that the change would for her be a glorious one, could have supported me under it; you will guess that I mean my dear benefactress Mrs. Gray. She bore her long and painful illness, with the same fortitude and gentleness, which she had displayed under her other trials. She was, to the last moment of her life, patient under the sufferings, and thankful for the blessings which it pleased Heaven to send her. While she had strength to bear it, she admitted every one who expressed a wish to visit her, in the hope that it might be in her power to say something to them, which on account of her situation might make a deep impression upon their minds, and be perhaps of some use to them during the remaining part of their lives. It was grateful to my heart, to see how anxious every one was about her. Mr. and Mrs. Grant saw her every day, and were constantly sending her

different kinds of nourishment and delicate food, which they hoped would be agreeable to her, and contribute to restore her strength. Even the cottagers brought fresh eggs, such fish as the brook which runs through our village affords, and other little tributes of gratitude and affection, such as their slender means would permit them to offer.

“ On the night preceding her death, Mrs. Grant and myself being with her, she requested me to raise her up with pillows, which when I had done, it seemed greatly to revive her. She looked round with a heavenly composure in her countenance, then pressing our hands, said in a faint though animated voice, ‘ Oh my friends! what a happy end is mine! how have I been gently and gradually weaned from the vain, transient delights of this world, and taught to look for real happiness only in another. Had I never known any thing but prosperity, I might have been tempted to repine at quitting a world which had so many charms; but the misfortunes of my advanced years have taught me, how little dependance may reasonably be placed upon wordly riches and happiness, and that the only thing to which a christian can look forward with perfect confidence and unmixed joy, is that future happy state of being, which the righteous God of the universe has, through his beloved Son, promised to those who endeavour to act as he has commanded.’ Then raising her eyes and clasping her tremulous hands together, ‘ Oh my heavenly Father!’ she exclaimed, ‘ I thank thee for all the blessing I have received at thy hands but still more for those afflictions which have purified my heart, and taught it to rest upon thee, as the only support which never fails. I have trusted in thee and thou hast sustained me. In my passage through life, in proportion as the clouds of misfortune have darkened my wordly prospect, my confidence in thy goodness has still increased. I thank thee for the comforts thou hast afforded me; and I bless thee that thou art now pleased to put an end to my trials, and take me to thy heavenly kingdom—that kingdom which my blessed

Saviour Jesus Christ is gone to prepare for all his faithful followers, and where, through thine infinite mercy, promised by him, I humbly and confidently hope to dwell with him for ever.'

"Here she fell back exhausted by the effort she had made, and a long silence ensued, which both Mrs. Grant and myself were too much affected to interrupt. At length she again revived a little, and turning to Mrs. Grant, said, in a faint voice, 'Let me once more, my dear friend, thank you for all your kindness to me. I shall soon be, where your excellent and reverend father now is. Nay, do not weep; but rejoice, that two persons, whom you loved, are safely arrived at their journey's end; and let the hope of a happy and eternal union, in the kingdom of our heavenly Father, console and animate you, during the remainder of your pilgrimage. For you, my daughter, my friend, my dearest Elenor, the comfort and support of my declining years, pursue the happy path which you have hitherto trodden, 'go on your way rejoicing,' and may the remembrance of your kindness to me, added to that of many other good deeds, sweeten your last hours; may they be as peaceful and happy as mine.'

"As she said these last words, she clasped her hands together and raised her eyes to heaven, with an expression of grateful rapture, after which she lay for nearly two hours speechless, but perfectly composed and easy, and then expired in my arms. Dear, excellent woman! If I hope to meet my end with the same heavenly composure, the same humble confidence that she did, to her example and instructions do I owe that animating hope. She taught me to love virtue, to endeavour to act as becomes a Christian; to her, under Heaven, I owe all my present comfort, and all my hope of a happy eternity."

Mrs. Williams was too much affected to proceed; tears trickled down her cheeks, and some minutes elapsed before she was sufficiently recovered to resume her narrative, which she at length did in the following words:—

"In her will my dear benefactress bequeathed to me all she was worth, consisting of her clothes, the furniture of this cottage, and six hundred pounds. The two first of these bequests I felt no hesitation in accepting, but as she had near relations, I scarcely seemed, I thought, to have a right to the third. Mr. Gray's conduct had been such, that I did not wish to see him in possession of it; but to his son, if as worthy as his disposition when a child seemed to promise, it might do much good, and I greatly wished to find out where he was, that I might enquire into his character, and if he appeared likely to make a good use of his aunt's property, put it into his hands.

"This thought was still uppermost in my mind, when one morning, about a month after dear Mrs. Gray's death, as I was sitting at work with Jane and Mary, some one knocked at the door. Upon opening it, a young man, neatly, but plainly dressed, with an open, interesting countenance, entered, and approaching me, begged to know if my name was not Elenor Williams? I answered that it was; upon which the stranger, with a kind of respectful tenderness, took my hand, saying, 'Although thirty years must have effaced all recollection of my features, I hope they have not made you quite forget your little favourite, George Gray.'

"I cannot express how much I was delighted when I heard who he was. I welcomed him with that cordiality which my feelings dictated; and having requested him to take a seat, begged he would inform me of his situation.

"He told me, that, at his father's failure, they had removed to Glasgow, of which town his mother was a native. A brother of hers put him to a mercantile school, and employed his father in his counting-house. About two years after their arrival in Scotland, his mother died of a nervous complaint, having, ever since his father's misfortunes, lived in a state of constant repining and discontent. His father only survived her a few months, having injured his constitution by the

fatal habit of drinking, to which he had from his youth been addicted, but which had greatly grown upon him during the last ten or twelve years of his life, and to the bad effects of which upon his character and business, he might in a great measure attribute his ruin. After the death of his father, he said, his uncle took him from school, and placed him in the situation which he had filled: but as he had a large family to support and place in the world, he at the same time informed him that it would not be in his power to do any thing more for him. With this uncle he had continued ever since, endeavouring to improve in the knowledge of business, and fix himself in habits of sobriety, industry and frugality. He had, he said, from the first of his receiving a salary, saved as much money every year as he could, hoping one day to be possessed of sufficient to enable him to enter into some branch of business for himself. 'I was well aware,' added he, 'that after many years of saving my capital would be small, but I resolved my expenses should be so likewise. My poor father's misfortunes had warned me against extravagance and speculation; I resolved to avoid both, and trust to industry and economy to procure me a competence: more I do not desire. It is so long since I have been accustomed to live plainly and attend to business, that the luxury in which the first fourteen years of my life were passed is almost forgotten, or if I ever think of it, it is to lament its fatal effects, both upon my parents and their generous benefactress.'

"He then proceeded to inform me that, having about a fortnight since seen an account of Mrs. Gray's death in a newspaper, and knowing himself to be her heir at law, his uncle had advised him to take a journey into England, and make some enquiry about her property. On arriving at Bristol, he enquired who was the most likely person to be able to give him the information he desired, and was directed to me.

"Suppressing my emotions, I coolly told him that Mrs. Gray had left all of which she died possessed, to me. His countenance changed, and he remained a

few moments silent, then turning to me with resumed composure, and taking my hand, he said, 'my aunt acted justly. You who maintained and rendered her for so many years comfortable, you alone had a right to the little which remained of her property. Her relations,' he added with a sigh, 'have already had too large a share.' He then arose, saying with a smile, 'I must trust to my old friends, industry and economy, for the completion of my scheme, and be thankful in the mean time, that my situation at Glasgow is so comfortable.'

"So saying, he approached me to take leave; but I begged him to stay, saying, I too had a scheme to propose. He accordingly resumed his seat, and I then told him that I had a particular friend, a native of Scotland, (meaning Mr. Grant,) who I knew had connections in Glasgow: that I intended requesting him to make all proper enquiry concerning his character, when if it proved as worthy as I fully believed it would, I would lend him the money his aunt had bequeathed to me, as soon as he could find an opportunity of entering into business with a rational probability of success.

"Mr. Gray's countenance expressed the most lively joy and gratitude, and he thanked me with such unaffected warmth, as brought tears into my eyes.

"I went accordingly to Mr. Grant, who immediately wrote a letter to Mr. Gray's uncle, which my young friend, as I already considered him, undertook to put into the post-office. So impatient was he to have it sent off, that I could not prevail upon him to dine with me that day, but he promised to do so upon the next.

"At the end of a fortnight Mr. Grant received an answer to his letter, than which nothing could in all respects be more satisfactory. It contained, not only the very best account of Mr. Gray's character and abilities, but an offer from a respectable trader in Glasgow, who was well acquainted with him, to give him a small share of his business. This offer he would gladly have embraced, had not my excellent friend;

Mr. Grant, kindly made enquiry in Bristol for a situation likely to prove advantageous to him, in which he was successful beyond his hopes.

"A merchant, who had grown rich from a very small beginning, by means of exact regularity, industry, and frugality, wished for a young man of the same kind of character, with himself, in whom he could place such a degree of confidence as would ease him of the laborious part of his business. To such a young man he proposed to give, not only a very good salary, but the opportunity of making a very advantageous use of any sum of which he might be possessed. He had for some time past been looking out for such a person; but in every one who had hitherto been recommended to him, he had discovered some habit or propensity, which in his opinion rendered him unfit for the trust he wished to repose. To this gentleman Mr. Grant had the goodness to introduce Mr. Gray, with whom he was so much pleased, that upon seeing the excellent character given him by his uncle, and the offer made him by the respectable Glasgow trader, he consented to take him into his counting house, and if upon trial he found him to be in all respects what he wished, and had reason to expect, he promised to repose all proper confidence in him, and to afford him every encouragement and advantage he could reasonably desire or hope for.

"Mr. Gray did not hesitate to accept this proposal, which on many accounts he thought likely to prove more advantageous than that made to him through his uncle. He had likewise greatly attached himself to Mr. Grant and his good lady, who had kindly requested him to live in their house, until he was settled in some good employment: he likewise declared that it would be particularly agreeable to him, to live where he might often see and converse with me, for whom he expressed all the gratitude and love, which an affectionate son usually feels towards a kind and worthy mother. During five years he regularly paid me the interest of my money, which I as regularly received; and instead of shrinking from enquiry as his father

used to do, he often, without my requesting it, gave me the most minute account of his affairs, and pressed me to inspect his books, which I often did with a high degree of satisfaction. His employer always spoke of him to Mr. Grant, in terms of the most perfect approbation ; in short being fully convinced that he might be trusted, I, at the end of this period, presented to him the note of hand which he had given me as security for my six hundred pounds, together with all the interest I had ever received from him. This he accepted with a mixture of reluctance and affectionate gratitude, which greatly affected me, and I never look back upon that hour without peculiar delight. He soon after married a young woman who was as prudent and worthy as himself ; his business prospered, and he often entreated me to accept the interest of his aunt's money, but as he had a large family to support and provide for, and I had already saved a pretty large sum, to which I added yearly, and hoped soon to be possessed of a competence, I would not hear of it. Both he and his good wife, however, often make me handsome presents, which I cannot bear to afflict them by refusing, and which are indeed a great assistance to me."

"It is no wonder," said Fanny, "that you are always so placid and cheerful, when you have so many good deeds to reflect upon."

"I have done but my duty, my dear child," said Mrs Williams, "upon any occasion ; and often, far too often, have I fallen short of that. If I have upon the whole been better than some of my neighbours, to God be the glory ascribed, for to his goodness in granting me so many superior advantages it is owing ; and never can I be sufficiently grateful for all the great and undeserved blessings he has graciously bestowed upon me. But it is growing late, and my story is almost ended ; what I have yet to relate principally concerns your mother.

"She became daily more amiable and worthy, and consequently dearer to me. She had entirely conquer-

ed her natural giddiness, but her disposition to take sudden rash likings to people, still remained in some degree; although the quiet manner in which we lived, having scarcely any acquaintance, added to her natural modesty and reserve, had hitherto confined its effects to her own sex.

“About this time a widow of the name of Summers, took a lease of a moderate sized farm in this neighbourhood. Her frequenting the same place of worship as myself, first brought us acquainted; and being pleased with her respectable manners and appearance, I was induced to accept a pressing invitation to visit her. She had a son about two years older than Jane; he was handsome and pleasing, and I immediately perceived that he was greatly taken with her, whilst she appeared less unwilling to converse with him than with any other man of her acquaintance. From this time he frequently called upon us; Jane’s shyness soon wore off, and she always appeared to behold his approach with particular pleasure. Upon my questioning her on the subject, she frankly acknowledged, that she had never met with any man who seemed to her so agreeable as Mr. Summers. I entreated her to be cautious how she suffered her affections to be engaged before she was certain he merited them. Although his manners were particularly pleasing, and his sentiments generally such as I approved, there was one circumstance in his conduct which gave rise to unpleasant suspicions in my mind; although few mornings passed without his calling upon us, he never came in an evening, and if we unexpectedly visited his mother at that time he was scarcely ever at home, and when I enquired where he was, she generally returned evasive answers, and would often sigh, and appear so dejected, that I felt certain all was not right; add to this, that he often appeared drowsy, and complained of head ache in the morning; all which contributed to make me fear his evenings were spent in a very different manner from what I wished those to be of any man who hoped to be connected with my dear niece. I told her my suspicions, and entreated her to let me in-

quire into his character; to which she readily consented, being fully convinced that every one must think of him as favourably as she did herself. In this, however, she was deceived; every body whom I questioned upon the subject, told us that he drank very hard, and was, when in liquor, so quarrelsome that it was dangerous to be in his company.

Jane would not believe this, at least not in any thing like the degree she had heard it represented: but soon after, upon Mr. Summers offering himself to her as a husband, she told him what she had heard. He assured her that the greater part of it was absolutely false, and said that he had many enemies, particularly the sons of a rich farmer who lived at a distance, one of whom wished to have taken the farm he then occupied; that they had several times contrived to make him drunk, and then put him in a passion and pick a quarrel with him, in order to hurt his character; but that he had now found them out, and that in future nothing they could do should make him fall into the same error. This improbable account Jane believed, and she would have married him immediately, had I not, with great difficulty, persuaded her to wait yet a little longer, before she entered into an engagement, which, whatever cause she might have to repent it, she would not have power to break.

Things were in this state when, one evening, having a bad head-ache, and the weather being very fine, I persuaded Jane and Mary to take a walk without me. They went accordingly, but returned in less than half an hour. I asked the reason of this, but was only answered by Jane's exclaiming, "Oh, my dear aunt!" when, unable to proceed, she sank, pale, trembling, and almost fainting, into a chair. Having come a little to herself, after a short silence, she threw her arms around my neck and burst into tears, exclaiming, "I am now convinced, that all we heard of Mr. Summers was but too true; for this evening, passing by the public house, I saw him before it, intoxicated, covered with blood, fighting with another man in the same horrid state, and the execrations and blasphemies they both uttered, were too dreadful even to think

upon. Oh, my best friend, what do I owe you! But for you, I had before this time been his wife. Forgive my obstinacy and folly."— "She could say no more; I pressed her to my bosom, and thanked God for thus saving her from destruction.

I scarcely need say, that all intercourse with Mr. Summers was from this time at an end. Poor Mrs. Summers soon after died, and her son married an amiable young woman, who would have reformed him if any body could have done so. Few who marry vicious men can effect a change in them. Mr. Summers went from bad to worse, until he became a mere sot, used his wife ill, neglected his business, and in less than five years was obliged to give up his farm. Whether he removed, or what became of him and his wretched wife, I never heard. The farm was taken by a sober, industrious, religious, worthy man, who is beloved and respected by all that know him; I mean your father, Mr. White. At the end of two years, each being fully convinced of the other's worthiness, he and Jane were married; and that they have always lived virtuously and happily together, I need not tell you.

"They have indeed," said the delighted Fanny.— "My father often says, he is indebted to you for the best of wives, as I am sure, I and my brothers and sisters are for the best of mothers. But what happened to you after her marriage?

"Having now," replied Mrs. Williams, "lost my principal assistant, and Mary Lewis's time being expired, I resolved to reduce my business to what I could do myself with ease and comfort. Having carried it on in this quiet manner for some years, as I began to grow old and my eye-sight to become dim, I consulted Mr. Grant, and finding that he had in his hands what would bring me in about forty pounds a year, I resolved to give it up entirely.

"I can still, by assisting my poor neighbours, and doing what little work I want for myself, find employment enough to amuse me. My friends are kind to me, and from your dear parents I receive the most affectionate attentions. You and your brothers and sisters are a great source of pleasure to me, and I pray

heaven that you may render the latter days of your parents as happy as they do mine. Your kind father gives me a conveyance every Sunday to church; and I often spend a week with Mr. Gray and his amiable family.

"The only affliction I have suffered since the death of Mrs. Gray, has arisen from that of my two brothers, with whom, although we were seldom able to meet on account of the distance which separated us, and the nature of their employments, I had kept up a regular correspondence. I console myself under the loss by the certainty, that, having led truly pious and virtuous lives as sincere believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, they will, through the tender mercy of their heavenly Father, enjoy everlasting happiness in that blessed world, where I hope in a short time to meet them again.

"I have been so peculiarly favoured by Providence through my whole life, that I can never express half my gratitude. I have many defects, many weaknesses: but I strive to amend and rectify them. For that salvation, which has been promised by our Lord Jesus Christ to all who diligently seek it, I trust with humble confidence to the infinite mercy of his father and my father, his God and my God."

Such was the simple story of "good Mrs. Williams." May you all, my dear readers, be induced to imitate her piety, her uprightness of heart, her benevolence, meekness and humility! And may your lives be as happy as hers! But should it be ordained by divine wisdom and goodness, that your faith, patience and resignation should be tried, and your virtue strengthened by sickness, poverty, or other sufferings,—remember, that whilst you preserve a clear conscience, and put your trust in heaven, you are in possession of "that peace of God which passeth all understanding, which the world can neither give nor take away." With this you can never be miserable, never want comfort.—"Whoso endureth," *patiently*, "to the end, the same shall be saved;" and "to those who are faithful unto death, shall be given a crown of life."

M. A. P.

WILLIAM'S RETURN;

OR,

GOOD NEWS FOR COTTAGERS.

BY MARY HUGHES,
AUTHOR OF THE TWIN BROTHERS.

PHILADELPHIA:

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WILLIAM'S RETURN, &c.

WILLIAM SEYMOUR was brought up to day-labour, in a small village in one of the midland counties; he had for some time been absent from home, to the great loss of his mother, who had been several years a widow; for, though she had three other children now able to maintain themselves, and do something for her, yet, from idle habits and bad management, it was not without difficulty that she procured the common comforts of life, and they never had amongst them a single guinea beforehand. Her husband was a sober, honest and industrious man, and while he lived things went on tolerably well; but instead of contributing her full share to the prosperity of her family by constant and active exertion, she contented herself with making and mending her own and the children's clothes, dressing their food and keeping the house tolerably clean. She might and ought to have done more than this; for she could spin both wool and flax, and do many other things which would have saved and gained money: but she thought only of living like the rest of the world, and made no attempt to be more notable than other women in their station.

Fortunately for the children there was a good school in the village; and William, who took great delight in learning, could read well, and write a tolerable hand, before the death of their father took

from them the means of further improvement: had he been properly encouraged, he might have greatly helped his brothers and sisters; but Sarah seldom called her children about the fire with their books in a winter evening; and on a Sunday, when they generally read a few chapters in the Bible, she never tried to explain the meaning of it to them; indeed, she knew little about it herself, seldom thinking of the contents, after she had closed the book; so that reading was to her rather an innocent than a useful employment.

She was naturally of a kind and gentle disposition, but had only that share of religion which is so common; just enough to keep her from being worse than most other people, but too little to make her resolve to be better.

William was in his twenty-second year, when a relation of his father's, who was a little older, called upon them in his way to visit a cousin who lived at a considerable distance, in a country which he described to be particularly desirable for active young men, as there was plenty of employment and the wages high. He easily prevailed upon William to accompany him; for he was of a lively disposition, and glad of an opportunity to see a little of the world. He had now been absent near eighteen months, and though he had written several times to his mother, none of his letters had reached her; when one evening, as she was returning home alone from the neighbouring town, she was to her great joy overtaken by him.

Nothing could be more kind and affectionate than their greeting, except that Sarah could not help mingling a few complaints of his long absence with her rejoicings at his safe return. To these William replied in the tenderest manner, "Dear mother, I own that I did wrong to leave you, but I hope the consequences of my journey will be most beneficial to you,

to me, and to all our family; for I bring home with me what I trust will make us all happy."

"How is that, dear William?" cried she eagerly. "You cannot in this short time have gained money enough to maintain us without working for the rest of our lives!"

"I have met with a friend," replied he, "a real friend, who has brought me to the knowledge of one who is both able and willing to do every thing for me, and for us all, that we can possibly wish or desire."

"This is great news indeed," cried she; "I thought, when I first saw you, that you looked more kind, more happy, than you had ever done before; and it is no wonder, since you have been so lucky. But tell me, my dear boy, who is this good gentleman, and where does he live?"

"I will tell you all that at my leisure," returned William; and during the remainder of their walk he asked a number of questions about the welfare and conduct of his brothers and sister, while he was away, which his mother was not able to answer much to their credit or to his satisfaction.

"Richard, you know," said she, "engaged himself, a little before you went, to work with farmer Smith, and with him he still continues, getting large wages; but what good does it do him? He has taken of late to be very much with Tom White, who is become a mere sot; and with him, to his own ruin and my heavy loss, he goes at least one evening in the week to the Bell, where he not only leaves half the money that he gets, but makes a brute of himself into the bargain; and when I talk to him about it, he flies out of the house, and will not hear what I have to say. I cannot describe to you how miserable this makes me; and I am sure he is unhappy himself, for he has not half the lively good humour about him that he used to have."

"I am truly concerned to hear this," replied William; "but I hope James and Mary still continue in their places, and are doing well."

"They are both at home," cried Sarah, sorrowfully shaking her head. "James was with a good master as ever lived: but it happened this year that the races came before the harvest was over; and as he had never been away from them since he was able to walk to the course (for you know I always loved to indulge my children), his master and he differed about his going; one said his corn must be got in, and the other would not stay at home to assist; so they parted. But what is to me much worse than this, poor Mary had a longing desire to see a play in the race week, and knowing that her mistress would not consent to her going, she went without asking leave, with the dairy-maid and coachman at the hall; and the matter being found out she was immediately dismissed, the lady declaring, that she would never keep a young woman in her house who had so little sense of her duty as to do what she knew her mistress disapproved; or so little regard to her own character, as to be out late at night, without a father or a brother in her company. Perhaps I did wrong in letting this poor girl go to all the diversions that were within her reach, while she was a child; it may have made it difficult for her to deny herself any pleasure now; but, be this as it may, her coming home was a great shock to me, for she had an excellent place, and we have not been able to hear of any other."

By this time they were within sight of the cottage, which stood pleasantly on a little green bank near the road. "How is it," cried William, as he approached, "that our house looks less cheerful than it used to do?"

"I suppose," replied Sarah, "it is because the kitchen window was badly broken by Richard and

his companion one night when he stayed out so late that James said he should not come in, and kept him some time at the door. To be sure the boards that are nailed upon it look very dismal; and, when the weather is dark, Mary and I can hardly see to work by the fire. The garden, too, you see, is quite out of order: Richard used to love working in it night and morning with you; but now he neglects it, and I have no heart to do any thing."

They now arrived at the door, where James and Mary met them, and shed tears of joy at sight of William. Richard entered soon after, and expressed equal pleasure; as soon as they were seated round the fire, "William brings great news," cried Sarah; "he has met with a friend who will not only be the making of him, but of us all."

Mary clapped her hands for joy, and both brothers eagerly inquired who it was, and what he would do for them. "Nay, nay," replied William, smiling, "do not expect that I will tell you all this at once; great, very great offers are made both to me and to each of you; but there is something to be done on our part, and I have made up my mind to do it, though it may seem at first a little difficult, for the gains are very great."

"But what sort of work is it?" said Richard; "I would willingly do my best, and labour hard, if the pay is so large as you seem to say."

"The work is far from hard, when you are a little used to it," replied William; "but it will take up all your time, and must never be out of your thoughts: for in this business you may, by one day's neglect, undo all that you have been doing for a month. The greatest difficulty is that of giving up our whole heart and mind to the work; and our master will accept of nothing less; he cannot be served by halves. I found this a hardship at first, and had now and then violent longings after old habits, and pleasures which he

does not allow; but I struggled hard against these inclinations, and every time I got the better of them I felt so happy when the trial was over, that it gave me fresh strength to resist the next temptation; and my mind is grown so light and cheerful, by continually thinking of the noble prospects before me, that I would not exchange conditions with the richest squire in the parish; nay, I would rather be the lowest servant in my master's house, than the greatest lord in the land, if I must forsake him."

"Well, but my dear William," interrupted his mother, "are you sure that you can get your brothers and poor Mary into this great family? I fear, as they have never been used to any thing but country business, they will not do for such a gentleman's house!"

"O, never fear," answered he; "both you and they may be kindly received, if it is not your own fault. Set your whole hearts upon his work, let nothing hinder you for a single hour in going forward with it, and resolutely give up whatever he forbids, and depend upon it he will reward you nobly. What say you, Richard and James? Can you resolve to do this, when you are certain that it will make your fortunes?"

"Why, to be sure," replied Richard, "we should be fools to go on slaving, as we do, for bread, and refuse such an offer!"

"But it is no easy matter," cried James, "to give up every kind of pleasure—sure he cannot be so hard a master as never to allow his servants a holiday, or a little rest!"

"His work," answered William, "is not of that heavy kind which requires rest; you feel yourself grow stronger, as you go on with it; and as for recreation, there is none so delightful as following the business, when once you have given your heart to it: he is so good, and kind, and wise, that it is a con-

stant delight to be with him, and live under his eye."

"Well, my dear brother," cried Mary, "I will go with you to this excellent master, and you shall teach me how to please him."

"Then you will be the dearest of sisters," replied he, "and the happiest of women. But can you resolve to give up all your own ways, and follow his ways; not merely in appearance, but from the bottom of your heart? If you will do this, your master will love you as his own child; and when he has proved your fidelity as long as he thinks proper, will give you a noble inheritance.

"But what wages does he give at present?" cried Richard. "From your appearance, I am afraid they are not very large. Your clothes, to be sure, are whole and clean; but you are no better dressed than if you lived with a common farmer. I always see the servants of the great gentry make a dashing figure, and look like gentlemen themselves; aye, and many of them take as much pleasure as their masters, going to races and all sorts of gay meetings, and spending their money so freely, if they happen to step into a public-house, that you would think their pockets were full of it."

"All this is very true," said William; "but what becomes of one of these dashing gentlemen in the end? He first learns to love drinking, which not only turns him into a brute, but opens the door to every vice, ruins his health, spoils his temper, and consumes his money. Few masters, however bad themselves, will bear long with a drunken servant: so he goes from place to place, never gains a friend, or has a shilling before hand. In consequence of his bad life, loathsome diseases and early old-age come upon him, his vicious companions fly from him, and he dies in an hospital or a workhouse!"

"But this is not always the case," interrupted

Richard, "with young men who love a little liquor: there is Mr. Field, of the Crown; he called in at the Bell last Sunday evening, as he returned from a journey: to be sure, he was not very sober when he came in, and he drank so much gin and water in the little time he stayed, that he could hardly mount his horse to go away; yet, after he was gone, my landlord told us that he had been one of the luckiest men in the world. It seems he was footman, and afterwards butler to 'Squire Foxley; and, after living a merry life with him for many years, neither master nor man ever going sober to bed, he married the lady's favourite maid, and set up at the Crown, where he has been living like a gentleman these twenty years. So, you see, a man may do well in the world without being remarkably sober."

"I'll allow," answered William, "that we sometimes see bad men appear to prosper, when you look only on the outside; but I happen to know something of the very person you have been speaking of, which will serve to show you what sort of comfort it is that they enjoy when all seems to go well with them. I chanced to travel part of my way home with a man who is his next door neighbour: and, as we walked along, he gave me a particular account of him. He married, as you have been saying, twenty years ago, and settled at the Crown, which the 'squire let him have at an easy rent, and he has never since been raised; besides which, both he and his wife had large presents, which, with what they had saved, enabled them to begin with every advantage. The 'squire, too, has always frequented his house, and recommended him to all his friends; so they have had a great run of business, and might have laid by much money: but his old habit still followed him; he could not keep himself sober; which of course often threw the house into confusion, and would have totally ruined him, had not his wife turned out sur-

prisingly notable, and looked into every thing. But notwithstanding all that she can do, it is well known that they have never put by a shilling, and have heavy debts. But this is not the worst; they have two children; the eldest was a fine handsome young woman, but her parents brought her up in vanity, dressing her like a lady, and having her taught dancing and many other things, which set her above doing any thing useful; she of course grew up saucy and headstrong, was no assistance to her mother in the house, but gave her company to every idle young man who pretended to admire her, hoping by this to draw in some gentleman to marry her. But the end of all has been, that, about ten months ago, she went off with a recruiting serjeant; a man whom her father liked as a drinking companion, but would have scorned as a son-in-law, even if his character had been much better than it is. They are now in a distant part of the kingdom; and she, in consequence of her husband's profligate life, is in great poverty, writing almost every week to her father and mother, and pressing them to send her money, which they cannot spare without bringing on their own ruin; I leave you to guess what a misery this is to them."

"Ah, dear William," cried Sarah, "I sincerely pity the poor man and his wife, faulty as they have been in the management of this thoughtless and ungrateful girl."

"I pity them too," replied William; "but is not this the consequence to be expected from bringing up a child in vanity and idleness? She was full of nothing but herself, had been taught nothing but to please herself, scarcely knowing that God was in the world! She too often, indeed, heard his name taken in vain and blasphemed in her father's house, and even by her father himself; but she never prayed to him, or heard of his power or goodness, except when she went to church; and I believe such as she go

there rather to pass an idle hour, to see and be seen, than to improve by what they hear, or to make good resolutions, and to ask for God's grace to strengthen them. But I have not told you all the misery of this man, whom you, dear Richard, thought so prosperous and happy.

"His son, who was a sensible lively boy, went to a good day school, but in the evenings was suffered to join his father, who never sat down without the jug and glass before him. At first a sip was given to the child, then half a glass, and by the time he was twelve years old, he had no objection to half a pint. As he was full of life and spirits, the guests grew fond of him; his foolish parents, vain of the notice he received from several gay young men of fortune who frequented the house, suffered him to go to cock-fightings and gambling matches with them, where all that he heard or saw helped to corrupt his mind. His father who used to boast that George could *drink* more strong liquors than would make many a stout man reel, began at length to perceive that it was growing into an every-day business, and that he was likely to be a confirmed drunkard, even before he became a man; that he neglected all learning, grew ill-tempered and overbearing; in short, he was aware that his son was in the high road to ruin; but, as he was yet young, he flattered himself that something might still be done to save him. With no small difficulty, George was persuaded to separate himself from his dissolute companions; and his father, straining all his credit to raise a sum of money sufficient for the purpose, placed him with an attorney in a distant town. His weak mother, hoping to make him more content with his new situation, sent him small sums of money, from time to time, which he regularly spent at a tavern near his master's house, where at every possible opportunity he indulged that fatal love of liquor which he had so early acquired.

Good News for Cottagers.

Here he gained a new set of profligate associates, and his expenses so increased, that, unable to supply them by any other means, he robbed his master's desk of several bank notes. This happened about a week ago; my fellow-traveller was at the Crown Field was, as usual, drunk when he opened it, or he would not have exposed its contents to all about him, and been the first means of proclaiming the infamy of his own son. When you saw him at the Bell, he was returning from a journey, which I fear must be hopeless, to try if he could prevail upon George's master to stop the prosecution.

"Now judge, my brother, if a drunkard is likely to be a prosperous or a happy man."

Richard seemed a good deal struck by this relation; and they continued to talk upon the same subject while they ate their frugal meal, and till they parted for the night.

In the morning, William was up the first; and, having procured proper tools, began to work in the garden, which was in a neglected and unprofitable state: his brothers went to their usual employments, after he had promised them, that when they came home at night he would tell them more about his plan for their future advancement.

In the course of the day his mother expressed her surprize, that he should go so industriously to work upon a spot which they were so soon to leave, and still more, when she saw him stop a travelling glazier, and give him directions immediately to mend the window: he desired his sister, too, to get him some lime from a neighbouring farmer's, and borrow a brush, saying, he was resolved to white-wash the whole inside of the house the following day.

"It is a sign, my dear child," said Sarah, "that you have been living in a fine place, by your want-

ing to do so much for this poor hut; but surely it is lost labour, as we are so soon going away."

"If we leave it," answered William, "it will be more comfortable for whoever comes into it next, and my master has taught me that I ought to love my neighbour as myself."

When the family were assembled at night, William unpacked a small bundle that he had brought with him, which contained an acceptable and useful, though not expensive present, for each of the family; and he gave them in so kind and affectionate a manner, that it more than doubled their value.

They were all eager to hear further particulars of what they called the *good news*; and James declared, that, let the difficulties be what they would, William should not go back without him. "But do you well consider what I told you last night," cried his brother, "that you must have no will but your master's, and give up every pleasure which he disproves?"

"I think," replied James, "for a time, I could resolutely give up any thing, if I was sure afterwards to be able to live as I like."

"Of that, then, I can positively assure you," returned William; "if you deserve his favour, he will give you more than you can expect, or even hope for."

"But how long," cried Richard, "shall one be in earning this great fortune? Will ten or twelve years do it?"

"I cannot exactly tell you that," answered William; "some are a longer, some are a shorter time about it: you must make up your mind to stay till he dismisses you."

"Nay, then," cried James, "I may grow old before he thinks I have done enough, and have no time to enjoy the fortune I have so hardly gained."

"No, no, my dear brother," replied William,

"do not fear that; perform your service to him faithfully, and he will take care to bestow the reward in such good time, that you will have youth and health, and plenty of time, to enjoy it in. Do your part, and be assured, he will not fail in his; and a noble part it will be; for, poor as you are now, the greatest prince upon earth will have occasion to envy you, if he does not enter into the same service."

"Nay, now you must surely be jesting with us," said his mother; "kings and princes command, instead of serving others. But do seriously tell us all that has happened to you since you left us, and what is your present situation; as often as I have asked you to do this, you have put me off, but yet in such a way that I cannot be angry with you."

"Aye, do, dear William," cried Mary, fondly embracing him; "I shall have no peace by day, nor sleep at night, till you have explained all these wonders which so puzzle us."

"Well," said William, smiling, "I will not keep you much longer in suspense; to-day is Wednesday; you must rest contented till Saturday evening, when, after the business of the day is over, we will assemble by this fire-side, and I will then tell you all that you can desire to know. In the mean time, let us all be as busy as we can, that we may truly enjoy the rest of the sabbath after a week of active industry."

This proposal was agreed to; and in the three following days William contrived to make such a wonderful alteration in their little dwelling, that you would hardly have known it for the same place. He white-washed every part of the house; had some articles of the furniture mended; and sent for a few necessary things from the neighbouring town; which, when Mary and her mother had made every thing perfectly clean, gave it a most comfortable appearance. He also got a man to assist him in making a neat and substantial fence about the garden, which was in such a state that more than half the crops

had been destroyed by the pigs, and even the horses, of a farmer who lived near them. His mother and Mary employed all the time they could spare in clearing away the weeds; after which he told them he would trench up the ground, that it might be the more easily kept clean during the winter, and in order for putting in the crops at the proper season. He also repaired the bee-house, which, from neglect, was in so ruinous a state, that, during heavy rains, the poor little creatures had been wetted in their straw houses, which had occasioned the loss of several hives.

By the time Saturday evening came, and the family were collected together, after viewing all that had been done in and about the house, as they were seating themselves round the fire, Richard began by telling his brother that one of the wonders he had to explain was, why he wasted so much money and labour upon a place they were likely so soon to leave.

"That seems strange to me," cried James; "if you go on at this rate, making every thing so neat and comfortable here, we shall feel unwilling to leave it; for it is natural to love the spot where one was born and bred, and, looking as it does now, I should prefer it to many a finer place."

"And I," said Sarah, "have been so happy ever since you came home, that I should rejoice to spend my whole life in the same manner. To be sure, we have worked hard; but you have all been so kind and good-tempered, and every thing has seemed so to prosper with us, that labour appears a pleasure. But come, my son, I long to hear all that you have to tell us; this dear, *good news*, which made my poor heart beat so joyfully when you first told me of it."

"Well, my dear mother," said William, "I will perform my promise to you all, and begin my ac-

count from the time that I left you, a year and a half ago. You may remember that I went with more pleasure, because George's cousin was distantly related to us; and I thought, as she had so kindly invited him, she would surely get me into employment; and after I had seen a little of the country, I intended to return. The weather being fine, and both of us in excellent spirits, we had a pleasant journey, and in the evening of the second day we by moonlight arrived at a small village, where, after making some inquiry, we were directed to a pretty looking white house with a thatched cover. It was not large, but in all respects of a better appearance than the cottages around it. The door was opened by a middle-aged woman, neatly, though very plainly dressed, and of a mild, agreeable countenance.

“Upon George's telling her who he was, and delivering a letter from his mother, he was kindly welcomed, and I more civilly received than I had any right to expect. We approached the kitchen-fire, by which sat a grey-headed old man, who appeared quite blind: near him was a small table, with a lamp burning upon it, and a bible open at the place where his daughter had been reading to him. She closed and removed the book on our entrance, and telling her father who was come, he stretched out his hand and heartily welcomed us both. After we had partaken of a comfortable meal, which both stood much in need of, and which was made doubly acceptable by the kind and friendly manner in which it was given, George and his relations made mutual inquiries about each other's welfare, and what had happened in both families during the many years in which they had neither seen nor heard from each other; and I, too, gave an account of the great loss we had sustained by the death of my dear father, and of our present situation. Mrs. Wilmot, who was the chief speaker, did not enter much into particu-

lars respecting herself; but I found that she and her father had been poor, but were now in easy circumstances, owing to a legacy which had lately been left them: I found, too, that they intended greatly to befriend George and his family, if they behaved in such a manner as to deserve it.

"Being tired after our journey, we went to bed early, in a room so handsomely furnished, that I almost thought I was got into a gentleman's house. George was in high spirits at the kind reception he had met with, and the good prospect before him; and we both resolved to go immediately to work, that we might try how we liked the country, without being a burden or expense to our worthy relations.

"The next morning we inquired whether any employment could be had near, and rejoiced to hear that a very rich farmer, who lived within a quarter of a mile, and was accounted an excellent master, in whose family Mrs. Wilmot had lived as a servant many years, would be glad to employ us, as this was a busy time, and she knew he wanted more hands. We then inquired whether we could get decent lodging in the village; upon which she told George, that she expected him to remain with them for some weeks: and added, that, if I conducted myself in a sober and regular manner, I might, if I pleased, stay also till I could provide myself better. I was delighted with this offer, and, saying I would pay her whatever she thought right out of my wages, thankfully accepted of it. She soon after went with us to Mr. Wright, who cultivated a fine farm of his own, and another which he rented, amounting together to more than six hundred acres; and he immediately hired us at good wages, and gave particular directions about what we were to do, for his husbandry is of the very best kind. Mrs. Wilmot then returned home to her household affairs and the care of her

father, and we took the opportunity of an idle day, to view the country; which was not a little beautified by Mr. Wright's handsome house, and the fine well-cultivated fields and tall trees which surrounded it."

"Now, William," cried Mary, "I know this Mr. Wright is the master who, you say, will do so much for us all: so I find he is only a rich farmer, when I thought he had been some lord, or great 'squire at least!"

"Well, Mary," said her mother, "and cannot a rich farmer, who has a good estate of his own, employ us, and be as good to us as any lord in the land?"

"That he can, no doubt," returned Richard; "but, by what William said, I thought we were at last to have had great estates of our own; and the master must be a king or a duke to have such things to give away to his servants."

"Well," resumed William, "you will find, in the end, that the master whom I trust we shall all be proud to serve, is great enough and rich enough to satisfy the utmost wish of our hearts."

"Do go on with your story," cried James; "I want to hear more of the old man and his daughter." William then proceeded as follows:—

"George and I walked all round the neighbourhood, and to the county town, which was not a mile from our home: there we got some dinner; and, after viewing every part of it, we returned, just as the evening closed, to our friend's hospitable house. We again found a most kind reception; the light cheerful kitchen seemed the abode of cleanliness and comfort; on the round table the tea things were placed, and the coffee-pot ready for boiling by the fire." "I consider you as visitors this evening," said Mrs. Wilmot; "but hereafter you must not expect this treat, except on Saturdays, when the business

of the week is over, and on Sunday, which is always a happy day of rest and thankfulness with us.'

"I could not help being delighted to see the dutiful and fond attention which this excellent woman paid to her father, whose helpless condition hardly seemed a misfortune to him, so kindly did she supply every want. After we had talked over all that we had seen in the day, she told us that it was a rule with her father to have a few chapters out of the Old or New Testament read to him every evening. 'He is but a poor sleeper,' said she, 'and it gives him something both pleasant and profitable to think of as he lies awake in the night:' and, telling us that she had ~~some~~ work that she wished to finish against the next day, she put the Bible upon the table, and requested one of us to read.

"George drew back, as not liking the task; but you know I was always fond of my book; and, O! what a pleasure and credit was it to me, now, that I was able to read tolerably well. I happened to fix upon a chapter in the prophet Isaiah which contains that remarkable sentence, 'All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.' Here Mrs. Wilmot interrupted me, by asking how I understood that passage. I had never been used to think much about what I read, and was quite at a loss for an answer; but at last I blundered out, that I supposed it meant, that nothing which we could do is pleasing and acceptable to God.

"The sentence,' said she, 'is so understood by many, but to me it appears in a very different light: indeed, to interpret it so would be to contradict all the plainest passages in the scriptures, which tell us, in numberless places, that, by turning from our iniquities, by ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well, we must save our souls alive. Nay, our beloved Saviour requires, as the only proof of our love to him, that we should *keep his commandments*. Real righteousness of heart and life is therefore the only

thing which can recommend us to his heavenly Father. But the righteousness which the prophet here means, is plainly that outward show of religion which was then put on by the Jews, and is now, I fear, by too many who call themselves Christians, as a cover for a wicked life.'

"She then asked me, whether I thought, if a man followed evil courses all the week, his going regularly to the public worship on Sundays would be pleasing to God? I answered, that I thought it would only be insulting him. 'You say truly,' said she; 'he who liveth in sin is dead while he liveth: his wages is death; and no show of righteousness that he can make, is better than filthy rags in the sight of the Just and Holy One, who will reward every man according to his works.'

" 'Then there is no use,' said George, 'in a bad man's going to church!'

" 'I am far from saying so,' answered she; 'I wish most sincerely that all bad men would go where they might have the evil of their ways clearly pointed out to them: I think one who does this every week can hardly fail to mend. But if he still continue the same, doubtless his punishment will be greater; having been better instructed, he will be beaten with more stripes.'

" 'Though I was not used to this kind of discourse, I could not help being pleased with it; the evening passed swiftly away, and soon after supper Mrs. Wilmot took a prayer book from the shelf, and said she hoped we could have no objection to join them in thanking our heavenly Father for the comforts and blessings of the past day, and begging his care and protection while we slept. George looked as if he would rather have gone to bed; but what I had heard in the course of the evening seemed to have prepared my mind for lifting itself up to its Maker. The prayer was short, but very solemn; and the earnestness with which she spoke (for it did not seem like

reading, but as if every word came from the bottom of her heart), together with the uncommon sweetness of her voice, affected me so much, that my eyes filled with tears, and I felt as if I had drawn nearer to God than I had ever before done in the course of my life.

"When we were gone up stairs, 'Surely, George,' I cried, 'we are got into a new world! This family seem in the straight road to heaven, and I should like of all things to join them in their journey.'

" 'You may do as you will,' answered he; 'but I like the world I have been used to, aye, and its pleasures too, whenever I can get them, notwithstanding all my cousin Margaret's praying and preaching.'

" 'Well,' cried I, 'if religion will always make me feel as happy as I have done this evening, no pleasure I am sure can go beyond it.'

"George was sleepy, and not disposed to talk; so I said no more to him, but I thought much and seriously in the course of the night; and, whenever I dropped asleep, dreamed that I still heard Mrs. Wilmot's sweet voice, begging blessings from the Father of Mercy, or reasoning on the happiness of a virtuous course of life.

Our clothes having arrived the night before by the waggon, we went betimes in the morning to our work at Mr. Wright's, taking our dinner with us, and returning in the evening to the comfortable fire-side of the old man and his daughter, of whom I became every day more fond. It was not so with George, who would often fall asleep while we were reading, and frequently complained to me that it was dull: nay, he would have been glad to spend an evening now and then at a public-house in the village; but his cousin and uncle spoke so much against it, that he was afraid to disoblige them, and with an ill grace gave it up.

"When Sunday came, we were all dressed and

ready for breakfast by eight o'clock; and every thing was so good and in such order, that you would have thought we were people living upon our own estates; and, indeed, no 'squire's family could spend Sunday more happily than we did. Let the weather be what it would, we always went twice to town to attend the public worship of God. It was a beautiful sight to see the blind old man leaning upon his daughter's arm, for she would suffer no one else to take the care of him: the great neatness and plainness of their dress, and the well-known goodness of Mrs. Wilmot's character, gained them respect from all who knew them; and the worthy minister whom they so constantly attended, never failed particularly to notice them: before our coming, they used often to dine at his house on a Sunday, but they now always returned with us; and though no one ever stayed at home to cook, Mrs. Wilmot always contrived to get a bit of hot meat and a pudding: every thing that could be wanting was put in readiness the evening before, that no business might interrupt the duties and pleasures of the day. Even George owned that he had never spent Sunday so agreeably any where else, for our minister was a very fine preacher, and he would not have missed hearing him on any account; yet what he heard did not seem to have any effect upon his heart and conduct; not that he led a bad life, but he felt no true love for God or his neighbour; he never swore himself, but he heard his companions do so without telling them that it was wrong; indeed, I believe he never felt a wish to make any one wiser or better than they were. I was the same, dear mother, as you well know, till I became acquainted with Mrs. Wilmot; but by reading the Bible and conversing with her, and hearing so many excellent sermons, my whole heart seems to have been changed; I feel that I am always in the presence of God, and my greatest delight is to strive every day to become more and

more like the blessed Son, in whom we see the bright pattern of all that we ought to be. The business of his life was to do good, and we should make it the employment of ours to benefit our fellow-creatures in every possible way, but more especially by instructing them in their duty; for, to persuade any one to lead a holy and virtuous life, is far better than giving him a great estate; the one he must soon leave, and go down into the grave; but the other will ensure his happiness through the endless ages of eternity."

Here poor Sarah burst into tears, and embracing her son, "O William," she cried, "what you have been saying goes to my heart. If I had been such a woman as Mrs. Wilmot, how different might all my children have been! But I have been ignorant and thoughtless, and was not fit to bring up a family!"

William tenderly soothed her; and, while Mary prepared their supper, he talked with his brothers on the happy change which religion had made in all his thoughts, words and actions.

When their meal was over, they all joined in entreating him to go on with his story, which he did in the following manner:—

"I had not been many weeks in this family, when one Sunday evening, Mrs. Wilmot being sent for to Mrs. Wright, who was taken suddenly ill, George took the opportunity of her absence to go out also, and I was left alone with the old man, who had before that time expressed a great liking to me, I suppose on account of the pleasure I took in assisting him whenever it was in my power. He bade me draw my chair close to his, and laying his hand upon my arm, 'William,' said he, 'I want to tell you a little of my past life; while my daughter is at home I cannot do it, because it is a history of my crimes and her virtues, and she will not suffer me to talk of either before her. She is the best of women, but she will not bear to be praised, thinking all that she can do

Good News for Cottagers.

too little; and still pressing on to follow her blessed Master, whose cross she is not only willing but desirous to bear. She was taught, from her earliest infancy, to worship God, and keep his laws, by her pious mother, whose hard lot it was to be, when very young, married to one who had no thought of religion, or of any world but this. I was a carpenter, and accounted a good workman; therefore money came in fast, and I spent it as freely: my dear wife did all she could to make me think, but I would hearken to nothing that was serious: she was so industrious, and so good a manager, that, having only this one child, she required but little of what I gained to keep our house in comfort, and gave our little Margaret the best schooling the village afforded: we might have laid up a little fortune for her, but I could never be persuaded to put by any thing: all that this excellent woman spared, I spent in public-houses. By indulgence I grew more and more devoted to drinking; and, cruel monster as I was, doubtless shortened the life of this best of wives. Margaret was about thirteen, at the time of her mother's death; and, grieved as she was, as far as her tender years would permit, endeavoured to supply her loss to me. But our house, now that I had lost all that used to restrain me, became often a scene of drunkenness and riot; and this dear child, finding all that she could say to me had no effect, determined to leave a place, unfit indeed for innocence like hers to inhabit.

“ ‘Your good master, Mr. Wright, was then just married; and the excellent character of her mother, together with her own remarkable modesty and good conduct, induced him to recommend her, young as she was, to his wife, as a house-maid. For some time after she left me, I contented myself with having an elderly woman to take care of my house; and then my dear girl came once in every week to see me; but, though she never reproached me, and tried all

means, as her mother had done before, to reclaim me, I continued devoted to liquor; and, though I could not help loving her, never gave her a single sixpence. She did not, indeed, want it; for she was as good a servant as she had been a daughter, doing exactly as her mistress directed, never hearkening to bad advisers, and always making her duty the great pleasure of her life.

“ ‘One Sunday, I remember, when she came to see me, I remarked, as I had often done before, that, though neat and always perfectly clean, she was dressed much plainer than the other girls of the village. I asked her the reason of this, and, cursing the covetousness of her mistress, threw her half-a-guinea, and bid her get something a little smart, like other people.

“ ‘She never heard me swear without being visibly shocked; the tears came into her eyes, and taking hold of my hand, ‘Dear father,’ said she, ‘may God pardon what he has just heard!’ And then returning me my money, ‘The plainness of my dress,’ said she, ‘is not caused by poverty, but choice; my dear mistress is as kind and generous to me as I can wish; and, what is still more, she encourages me to be frugal, offering to take every guinea that I can spare, and pay me interest for it; so that I hope, if the Almighty graciously continues my health, in a few years to have laid by what will enable me to be a comfort to your latter years.’

“ ‘Here,’ continued William, “the tears ran down the old man’s cheeks; and squeezing my hand, ‘You will hate me,’ he cried, ‘for hardening my heart against such an angel of a daughter: but I am now coming to the worst part, to what I shall never think of without the bitterest remorse. The practice of one sin is certain to lead to more; I had long accustomed myself to swearing and drinking, and I now added, perhaps, a blacker crime than either. I car-

ried on a shameful intrigue with the servant of the public house, where I spent my evenings; a bold, dressy girl, of whom I became so fond, that I married her.

“ ‘I will not attempt to tell you what my dear child suffered on this occasion; she came no more to my house, which was now become less that ever fit for one so modest and virtuous. It was the habitation of guilt, and of course soon became that of misery. My wife was dirty, ill-tempered and extravagant; I was obliged to work harder than I had ever done, to maintain an ill-managed and increasing family; and, as I still indulged my old habit of drinking, in which she had no objection to join me, whenever she had an opportunity, we were sometimes absolutely in want of bread.

“ ‘This brought home to my mind the remembrance of past times; when, ungrateful, hard-hearted wretch as I was, I had always a clean, quiet and comfortable fire-side to come to; and an industrious, gentle and pious wife, who never did more than mildly reason with me on my ill conduct. O that I had hearkened to her sweet voice! How many years of guilt and wretchedness would it have saved me! But I was a poor besotted wretch, too proud to be advised, and thought all joy lay in pleasing my own vicious inclinations. But how different is the truth! Old and blind as I now am, I am far happier than ever I was in the days of youth and health, before my heart turned to God. Well might king David say, ‘I would rather be a door-keeper in the house of the Lord, than dwell in the tents of wickedness;’ and again, ‘One day in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.’ This I feel to be true: my days of riot I look back upon with anguish; my heart now detests what I then was.’

“ Here the old man fell upon his knees, and lifting up his clasped hands, ‘Blessed, ever blessed, be

our merciful Father,' cried he, 'for giving me grace and time to repent. I might have died in the midst of my sins, and have been one of that wretched number, who will call upon the rocks to fall upon, and the mountains to hide them from the wrath of that God whose laws they have broken, and whose mercy they have rejected.' "

William was here so much affected with the recollection of the old man's penitent thankfulness, that he stopped, and his eyes filled with tears. His mother and Mary wept too, and Richard and James were greatly moved: "Go on, go on, my dear son," said Sarah, after a pause; "I long to know how so great a change in his heart was brought about."

"I will go on," said William, "as nearly as I can, in his own words: you used to say I had a surprising memory, and now it is of real use to me, for I believe I could tell you the substance of almost every sermon which I heard during the year and a half that I was absent; I always made it a rule to write down the text of each, as soon as I came home, in a little book which Mrs. Wilmot made me for the purpose, and that brings the whole discourse to my recollection. But I will now proceed with my story:—

"When Mr. Wilmot was again seated, and he had taken a little time to recover himself, he went on, as nearly as I can remember, in the following words:

"I lived this wretched life nine years, during which time my daughter still continued at Mr. Wright's. She often contrived opportunities of speaking to me, though she never came my house; indeed, my wife had a violent aversion to her; insulted her if they met by chance, and abused her in the cruelest manner to all who would give her a hearing: but my dear Margaret's character was beyond her reach; her excellent conduct had too well established it, to leave a malicious tongue the power of hurting her;

and she never was known to say one ill word in return for all the cruel usage she received. She sometimes, in the most kind and gentle manner, ventured to tell me the consequences to myself of the wicked life I led, and the dreadful example I set to my children, for I had three young ones: but though I felt the stings of conscience, at times, to a degree that almost made me mad, it had no other effect than to make me torment myself and my unhappy wife, who never failed to inflame my passions by the violence of her own. She often swore at me, and I am ashamed to tell you that I have been so cowardly a wretch as even to strike her.

“ ‘I have now a matter to relate which I can never reflect upon without horror and the deepest regret: but I will conceal none of the effects of my vices from you; God knows them all, and to what purpose should I hide them from man? I trust that he has forgiven them too, that my repentance is sincere, and that my heart is wholly changed; that I am, to use our blessed Lord’s own words, ‘Born again, and become a new creature.’ I now hate and abhor all that I used to delight in: and that holiness of heart and life, which was my scorn and jest, is now all the desire and joy of my soul. Surely this is putting off the old and carnal man: and, O my heavenly Father,’ added he, clasping his hands together, ‘do thou enable me to put on the Lord Jesus day by day. Let me not lose the few remaining hours of my life; but grant that I may devote every one that is left, to purify my heart and affections more and more from that corruption into which a life of sin had plunged me.’

“After a pause, he again went on: ‘I have before told you, that I spent many of my evenings at the house from whence I took my wife. One night, when half drunk, I quarrelled with my companions there and came home, earlier than usual, in no very good

humour: my wife, as usual, met me with reproaches, and we had a violent quarrel. I threatened to turn her out of doors; and then swore that I would quit the country, and leave her and her children to beg, or to go to the workhouse. This so provoked her, that she took up a stool, which happened to be near, and threw it at me; but it was heavy, and, not reaching its mark, fell upon the hip of my eldest boy with such violence that it injured the bone. This dreadful accident brought us to our senses, though it increased our enmity to each other: for I reproached her, in the bitterest terms, for having done the deed, and she as strongly insisted that all the fault was mine, for having provoked her to it. The child was in great pain; but, not knowing how bad he really was, we only got a woman in the village, who was skilful in curing bruises, to come in. She did what she could for him, but he had a wretched night; and while we were consulting in the morning what we should do, for we plainly saw that he was much worse, my dear Margaret passed by the window, and knocked at the door. I would gladly have opened it; but my wife caught my arm, and with savage violence cried out, 'She shall not come in; if she does, I will serve her as I did the boy.' She added oaths, and spoke so loud, that Margaret heard every word, and, trembling, retreated from the door. A second struggle would now have arisen between us, and heaven only knows to what length we might have gone, had not a neighbour come in, and put a slip of paper into my hand, which contained these words, written, by Margaret: 'Dear father, I beseech you to be calm; a surgeon will be with you in half an hour; do not say that I sent him.'

" 'Even my hard heart was softened; I went up stairs to my boy, and, sitting down by his bed, the first tear which had visited my eyes for many a year rolled down my cheek. My daughter at that moment

seemed an angel to me: but this ray of light, which shone on my darkened mind, was soon extinguished by my wife, who thought I had sent for Margaret, to whom she had an aversion which could only be caused, as Cain's hatred to Abel was, by the knowledge that Margaret's deeds were good, while her own were evil. She soon put all right thoughts out of my head, and we went on wrangling till the surgeon came. He is a man of great skill; and, by a long and careful attendance, my poor Peter was restored to health; but he will be a cripple for life: the limb which was broken, is much shorter than the other, and he will never move again but upon crutches. Indeed, his life must have been lost, had he not been sustained, in his long confinement, by the nourishing things which Margaret's kind mistress permitted her to make and send to him almost every day. As these things came from Mrs. Wright, my wife durst not refuse them; but she often said she would rather see any child of her's starve, than take a bit of bread from the hand of Margaret.

" "I will say no more upon so shocking a subject, but that this excellent creature, with her mistress's assistance, paid the surgeon's bill.

" "Well, after this, I still continued to lead the same kind of life, never thinking of God; hating and hated by my wife; careless of my children, for whom I thought I did all that could be required, by working to feed and clothe them, though they grew up untaught, and, from the evil example daily before their eyes, contracting those bad habits which are the seeds of future vices. But I make my story too long, and will hasten to the end. One thing more I must, however, tell you of my daughter, to shew you how unlike she was to the generality of young women.

" "She had many offers of marriage; indeed, there never was any one more generally beloved by all who knew her; but she rejected them all, which surprised

me a good deal; I thought, however, that it was her concern, not mine, and said nothing to her about it, till a young man, who was in a good way of business, came to me to beg that I would speak to my daughter on his behalf. I told him, at first, that I would have nothing to do in the matter; but, upon his offering me a handsome present if I could bring it about, I promised to speak to her. I accordingly called at Mr. Wright's the next day, and said all that I could to recommend him, telling her that, by refusing this offer, she would spoil her own fortune, as she could never hope for so good a one again.

“ ‘ I will give you her answer, as nearly as I can remember, in her own words:—

“ ‘ All that you say in commendation of this young man may be true, and I should perhaps have a better prospect in marrying him than most women have when they enter the state; but I am truly content and comfortable now, and why should I wish for a change? You say that this young man loves me so much, that he will be unhappy if I refuse him; but of that I make little account; he has seen and known me too short a time to make it possible that I should be necessary to his comfort. My mistress I know to be my sincere friend; I have rejoiced in her goodness for many years; and she has told me that it would be a real grief to her to part with me. I think too, that I am more useful in this great family than I could possibly be in a small house of my own: whenever a young servant comes into it, I do her every kind office in my power, shew her how to do her work in the manner our mistress requires, and endeavour to cure her of her faults; above all things persuading her to love and serve God. I trust, that I have been useful to many in this way, and particularly to the parish apprentices, whom I always take under my especial care; for they are often very ignorant, and sometimes ill-disposed; but, by continu-

ed kindness and patience, I have often succeeded in making them steady, good girls.

“ ‘ What a happiness is it to me to believe, that I have been the means of saving several of my fellow-servants from ruin, and turning them from sin and vanity; to serve the living God!

“ ‘ Can you wonder my dear father, that I am unwilling to leave a situation which I believe to be as happy as any this world can bestow; and, what is still much more, by affording me many opportunities of doing good, it prepares me for meeting my Lord at the great day of account, when every one will be judged according to what he hath done, whether it be good or evil.

“ ‘ You will perceive, by my recollecting it so well, that what my daughter said, made a strong impression upon me; but I was too proud and obstinate to own it, and said much more to persuade her to the match, asking her why she wished to be so unlike other people?

“ ‘ She answered me thus: ‘ I do indeed wish in many things to be unlike most other people; for I am firmly resolved, by God’s assistance, to follow the pattern set me by my true master, Jesus Christ. He was always employed in doing good, in turning men from their evil ways, in relieving their wants and setting them a perfect example of piety and purity. I think of him every hour, and continually ask myself what *He* would have done in my place. O my father, if you knew how happy this course of life makes me, what a thrill of joy every sacrifice to God’s will gives to my heart, you would soon break from all evil habits and walk with me in the true road that leads to everlasting life!’

“ ‘ This dear creature then threw her arms about me, and I felt my heart softened: I returned her embrace; but the next moment, recollecting the life which I led, and the sins with which my soul was loaded, I shuddered from head to foot; I felt as if

my touch polluted such angel purity, and broke away from her. In my way home, I had many serious thoughts, and half resolved to become a new man: but the first sound of my wife's voice unhinged my weak resolutions; and I finished that very day, by adding to my crimes another night of intoxication.

“ ‘ After this, I often thought seriously of what my daughter had said to me from time to time. I well knew that I was in the road to destruction; but I hoped as I had still a prospect of living many years, that I should repent and make my peace with God before my death. But evil habits gain strength every day; it is easier to reform at five-and-twenty than at fifty, for sin hardens the heart; and in this miserable state, resolving to amend, but still putting it off from day to day, I should too surely have gone on till the short hour of life was passed, and nothing left me but the horrors of a death-bed repentance, had not the Almighty mercifully visited my family with a dangerous sickness. My wife fell ill first, and soon after our three children, of a fever which was then very fatal in the country. As soon as my daughter heard of it, she came to us; and, finding her mother-in-law delirious, and one of the children in a dangerous state, she determined, at the risk of her life, for the disorder was infectious, to come to us to nurse and tend upon her who had been her cruellest enemy; thus proving herself a true disciple and follower of him whose last prayer to God was for the forgiveness of his murderers. She went back to gain the leave of her mistress, and to bring some money and clothes; for she resolved not to enter Mr. Wright's house again, till our illness was over one way or the other, lest she should carry the infection with her.

“ ‘ Where I to attempt describing the behaviour of this excellent creature, I could give you but a faint notion of it. She sent for the same gentleman who had brought Peter though his illness, telling me she

would pay the bill; I had no money before-hand, but she took care that the sick should want for nothing, sending for every thing which the doctor recommended, dressing all their food herself, and giving it in the tenderest manner; sitting up every night; and only taking a few hours sleep now and then, when I kept watch in her place.

“ ‘ All the children were now ill, and in the third week the youngest died in the arms of Margaret, who seemed to feel all the tenderness of a parent for the poor little creature; yet she supported herself with surprising firmness; and, on my expressing a great repugnance to applying to the parish, which I had never yet done, for the funeral, she said, ‘ That is a virtuous spirit, my dear father; while we have any thing of our own, we will not ask for assistance; but, should our little stock fail, we will thankfully receive it, and bless God that we live in a country where such certain relief is provided for those who are really in want.’ So, by selling my watch, and a few other things that we could spare (for I would not let Margaret spend her money on that occasion), the expense was defrayed.

“ ‘ Whenever my wife had an interval of reason, Margaret would kneel down by her bedside and utter a short prayer, then gently take her hand, and drop tears upon it; but the unhappy woman would turn from her, crying, ‘ No, no, it is too late, too late! God has cast me off!’ Then she would groan so dismally, that my soul was filled with horror. If my daughter talked of mercy and forgiveness, she would exclaim, clasping her hands, ‘ O I have no time to repent! He snatches me away in the midst of my crimes!’ and then fall into such agonies, that we feared again to speak to her, lest it should bring on her last pangs.

“ ‘ The heavenly conduct of my daughter, and these dreadful scenes, at length entirely subdued my

stubborn heart; I felt a sincere detestation of my former life, and prayed fervently to God for his powerful assistance, to enable me from that time to become a new creature. My prayers came from a truly penitent and contrite heart, and the Almighty heard them. As a fatal love of liquor had laid the foundation for all my crimes, I firmly resolved never in future to drink any thing but water, with the exception of such cordials as should be necessary for my health; that my old vice might have no opportunity of stealing upon me by degrees, which it might have done unawares to me, if I had not thus secured myself against it. I felt easier when I had begun to practise this self-denial; I helped my dear child in all that I was able, felt my mind lightened by joining in frequent prayer with her; and the delight which she expressed at this change in me, was a cordial to my heart. Our frequent discourse was of the means we would use to turn my poor wife's heart to God, if it should please him to spare her life, and how earnestly we would labour to bring up my remaining children in his ways.

“ ‘ Things were in this state, when the fever attacked me; from which time I can remember little or nothing that happened for several weeks. I was, I believe, as near death as any one who recovered could be; but my angel daughter's unwearied care at length restored me. When I recovered my senses, I seemed to be awaking from a long sleep; the first object that I saw was my dear child sitting at work by the bed-side. I looked round the room; Peter and Ann were by the fire, speaking to each other, but in so low a voice, that I could not hear what they said. The moment my daughter perceived the state that I was in, she hastily dropped her work, and taking my almost lifeless hand between hers, a plentiful shower of tears relieved her full heart. Perceiving that I tried to speak, she begged me to remain silent,

and brought me a cordial which the doctor had left with her, foreseeing the state in which I should awake, if the Almighty spared my life. After this, she gave me something comfortable and nourishing almost every hour, and I gradually gained strength. As soon as she thought it safe, she acquainted me with the death of my wife, which happened soon after I was taken ill; but it was long before she would tell me the particulars of it.

“ ‘O William! is there a scene upon earth so dreadful as the death-bed of the wicked! I will not shock you with the description; but, be assured, was there no further punishment to expect in another world, all the sinful pleasures which we could crowd into this life, would not make us amends for those hours of agony in which they must end. O how thankful was I to God for raising me from the bed of sickness, and, by prolonging my days, giving me an opportunity of proving the sincerity of my repentance by a thorough change of conduct! My thoughts by day, and my dreams at night, were full of plans of industry and piety for my future life.

“ ‘I hoped, by continual labour and hard living, to be able to bring up my two dear children, who were now perfectly recovered, and to repay my generous Margaret the money which she had freely bestowed upon us in our time of need, which amounted to nearly thirty pounds, the whole savings of her virtuous life, which she had cheerfully laid out in providing all that was wanting in our long illness, and in burying my poor wife; nor would this have been sufficient, but for the kindness of Mr. Wright, who paid the doctor’s bill, and that of his good lady, who supplied us with linen and many other things which we could hardly have procured.

“ ‘When all danger of infection was over, Mrs. Wright came herself to see us, and expressed great impatience for Margaret’s return to her place: but,

alas! as I grew better in other respects, the disorder settled in my eyes: at first they inflamed, and gave me great pain; but after a time the humour seemed to dry up, and the pain gradually left me; but my sight went with it, and by degrees I became totally blind. When I first began to foresee this misfortune, it was a great shock to me, not so much on account of the sorrow I felt in losing so precious a sense, as because it must put an end to all the plans of labour by which I had hoped to make some amends for the many years that I had lost. When I spoke of this to my dear child, she laid balm upon my wounded heart; 'Be comforted, my dear father,' said she, 'put your trust in God, and be certain that this great affliction comes in mercy, and for our good. Let us humble ourselves under his chastening hand, and thankfully receive all that he thinks fit to send. This is a life of trial, in which our gracious Father gives us an opportunity to fit ourselves for his kingdom of glory: even our blessed Master was 'Made perfect by suffering:' 'He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;' and, if we would be his disciples, we must willingly 'Take up the cross, and follow him.'

" 'I cannot describe to you the comfort which these words gave me; I thought of them over and over, and ceasing to lament, I bowed in thankfulness to God for all my afflictions. I felt the happy change which they had wrought in me; the foolish and sinful pride which I had nourished in all my former life, left me. I was contented with the prospect of spending the remainder of my days in a workhouse, where I knew my daughter would often visit me; and I hoped, even there, by the gentleness of my behaviour, to do some good; for I now wished well to all my fellow-creatures, and even thought I might be useful to those who would hearken to me, by warning them from evil and persuading them to good.

" 'I mentioned these plans to Margaret, and pro-

posed taking the children with me, till they were able to work. 'Now I see,' said she, tenderly embracing me, and dropping a tear upon my cheek, 'Now I see that you are a sincere Christian: you will willingly submit to whatever God sees best; and, wherever you go, you will be employed in doing all the good you can to his creatures. But, O my dear father, can I go back to my happy home at Mr. Wright's, and leave you and your children? No, no; I have youth and health, and I will labour for your support; we have no debts, and I have still a little money left. My dear mistress, who knows what I intend, has already furnished me with work, and by her means I do not doubt of a constant supply; for she has spoken to several friends on my behalf, and also kindly promised to employ Ann in picking stones, weeding in the garden, and any other work that she is able to do. As for poor Peter, he will be a companion to you when I am obliged to be absent; and I trust God will enable us, in a few years, to put him into a way to get his bread.'

" 'You may guess how much I was affected by all this; to spend the remainder of my life under the care of my dear daughter, to be fed by her tender hand, and continually hear her sweet voice uttering words of joy and comfort, seemed too great a happiness; more than I deserved, more than I could bear. I therefore reasoned and argued with her against the plan; I grieved that she should give up a life of ease and comfort, and submit to close confinement and hard fare: but she kept steady to her purpose; and, though several excellent offers of marriage could not tempt her to give up her happy and useful station at Mr. Wright's, she cheerfully left all, to be the support of her blind father and his helpless children.' "

Here William was interrupted by his sister bursting into tears, and earnestly exclaiming, "I did not

think there had been such a woman in the world! I never thought any body could be so good! O, if I could but be like her!"

"And why can you not?" said William: "resolve to follow *her Master*, to copy his bright example in every action of your life; and we shall see in you another Margaret Wilmot. How dearly shall I love my sister, and how precious will you be to us all, if you steadily do this!"

"Indeed," cried James, "I believe you will cause a great change in us all; I see things in quite a different light from what I ever did before; I feel as if serving God ought to be the chief business of life, and that nothing else can make a man happy."

"And I," said Richard, "have heard enough of public-houses! I will make no hasty promises; but I think I would far rather join the blind old man in drinking water, than again make the brute of myself that I have too often done of late. But do proceed with your story; I could sit up all night to hear you."

William, highly gratified, went on, still relating in the old man's words:—

"My dear girl worked hard, and lived hard, to maintain us; and I, who could do nothing to assist her, who had cruelly neglected her for years, was the chief object of her care and tenderness. Often would she repeat texts out of the Scriptures, and sing sweet psalms and hymns to me as she sat at work: we prayed together with the children every night; and on Sundays I went leaning on her arm, and poor Peter supported by Ann and a crutch, twice to the public worship of God, in town; where our minister, who is one of the best and most pious of men, soon took notice of us, and in bad weather often kept us at his house to dinner, gave Margaret many valuable books, and several to the children, to help them in their learning: and, indeed, he has been the best of friends to us ever since. The Sabbath was a day of

delight to me; for, besides the two excellent sermons which I heard, my dear daughter had then time to read to me; and I carefully treasured up what I heard to think of it all the week. Busy as she was, Margaret never failed to teach the children one lesson each every day; and here I had the happiness to be able to give some assistance. Peter came on surprisingly; and both, under our steady and gentle management, improved daily, and gradually got the better of all the bad habits which, alas! had taken hold of them, from the time that they were able to imitate the evil example set them by myself and their unhappy mother. O how thankful was I to God for the change in my own heart, which enabled me not only to work out my own salvation, but, by continually setting before these dear children the goodness of our heavenly Father in sending his beloved Son to shew us the path of life, and impressing on their tender minds the delights of that happy dwelling to which it leads, to teach them early to fix their affections on that world whither our Lord is already gone! How would their young hearts beat with pleasure, when I talked to them of the time when Jesus, our blessed Teacher, will come in the glory of his Father to call us from our graves; and how eagerly have they asked me how soon I thought they should die, and this happy time come!

“In a little time, Peter was able to read so well, that, while Ann began to help her sister at work, he instructed us in the word of God. Then began the happiest days of my life; we strove to do our duty here, while our hearts were fixed upon heaven; and we each of us looked forward to the day of our death, as the beginning of our happiness.

“Do not suppose, from this, that I forgot to think often of my former sinful life! O, no! never shall I cease bitterly to lament the evil use I made of so many precious years, graciously lent to me for

a very different purpose: but I look back, though with deep regret, yet, I thank my God, without terror; for he hath told us, by his holy prophet, that 'If the wicked man turn from his evil ways, he shall save his soul alive.' My heart, which was corrupt and grovelling, now lifts itself up with joy to him who made it. For my blindness I am thankful to him, for it turns my thoughts inward: for the pains and infirmities of old age I thank him, for they exercise my patience, and remind me every hour that my departure from this world draws near. Yes, my dear William, were he even to take my prop, my support, my darling daughter from me, I would still bless and adore his mercy; knowing that his goodness will soon bring us together, in the glorious realms of everlasting day.'

"Here the old man stopped: I was greatly affected; but, begging him to go on, lest Mrs. Wilmot's return should prevent his finishing the account that day.

" 'I have little more to add,' he continued; 'we lived just in the manner I have described nearly seven years; my dear daughter working hard for our maintenance, and living herself upon the coarsest fare: many times have I found, by questioning the children, that she has prepared a comfortable dish of coffee, or basin of broth, for me, while she tasted of neither herself; and she taught this self-denying spirit to the children: when I have earnestly begged that we might all fare alike, even Peter and Ann would answer, 'No, dear father, the plainest fare is pleasant to us; we are young and healthy, and it would be a shame for us to pamper ourselves with niceties; but if we live to be old or sickly, some kind friend will prepare good things for us, as Margaret now does for you.'

" 'Think how all this affected me, and what reason I had to be thankful to God for giving me such children for the support of my latter years!

“ ‘ About the time I now speak of, when Ann was in her thirteenth, and Peter in his twelfth year, an aunt of Mr. Wright’s who was lately become a widow, came to his house. She was a worthy woman, but what is generally called ill-tempered: on this account she had lived on bad terms with her husband, and used to spend a good deal of her time at Mr. Wright’s, while my daughter was there. No one of the servants besides Margaret could please her; but she pitied this infirmity, which rendered the poor lady more unhappy herself than it could any one else, and made it her study to oblige her, which the sweet gentleness of her own disposition made easier to her than it would have been to almost any other person; and Mrs. Martin, on this account, became very fond of her. She had been, for some years, in a distant part of the kingdom, with her husband; but now, upon his death, was come with the intention of spending the remainder of her days at Mr. Wright’s, where she said she had always found herself happier than in any other place.

“ ‘ She sent for Margaret soon after her coming, and lamented her having left the family, saying, that her chief object in coming there was, to have the comfort of her attendance; which, now that her health was declining, became more desirable than ever to her. She found, however, that my daughter’s time was so fully occupied in her work, her care of me, and instructing the children, that she could see but very little of her. Of this she complained to Mr. Wright, who was so anxious to make her comfortable, that he proposed to her to build a parlour and a bed-room, in addition to our house, which she might furnish in what manner she thought proper, and, taking a servant to do the under work, Margaret might spend most of her time in attending upon her.

“ ‘ She joyfully embraced the proposal, and sent

for my daughter to speak to her upon the subject. This kind and dutiful child would agree to nothing without consulting me. I rejoiced, you may be sure, at the prospect of lightening her labours, for I often feared her constant confinement and close attention to needle-work would be hurtful to her health; I therefore looked upon this proposal as a mean, sent by our gracious Father, for her relief, and most thankfully accepted of it.

“ ‘ Margaret, however, begged leave to alter the plan in one respect; she did not wish to have a servant, knowing that Ann was now able to do every thing that would be wanting, under her direction.

“ ‘ Well, in a few months the building was finished, the rooms furnished, and Mrs. Martin took possession of them. She added many things which were now become necessary to our little stock of furniture; and, as Margaret studied to please her in every respect, she often told us that it was the most comfortable time of her life. She would, indeed, at times, be very unreasonable; but my daughter taught Ann always to answer her gently and submissively; and, by owning the truth on all occasions, when any thing amiss had happened, she gained the lady's good opinion, and had many kind presents from her.

“ ‘ But what Peter gained from her was still more valuable; she was often so good as to take him, for an hour or two together, into the parlour, to instruct him in writing and accounts. To be sure, it was not every child who could have profited by her kindness; for if he was in the least inattentive, or even dull, she would angrily send him away, and take no further notice of him for a day or two. But the good lessons of Margaret had such an effect upon him, that he took all her rebukes meekly, and did his utmost to oblige her. I cannot help thinking that the bad temper of this poor lady has been of great service to these dear children; for it taught them early

to curb their own, and by habit it became so easy, that, instead of being disposed to be passionate or saucy when she was unreasonable, they pitied her, and tried by every gentle means to bring her to herself again.

“ ‘This disposition, which my dear daughter so beautifully exemplified in her daily conduct, is surely that meek and humble spirit, which our beloved Lord enforced as necessary to every follower of his, and to the practice of which he has promised a degree even of worldly prosperity, ‘Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.’ And we see this promise daily fulfilled: for, while violent, passionate, and revengeful people are wretched in their own minds, and make themselves enemies wherever they go; the kind and gentle gain friends, who help them in difficulties, and rejoice with them when they are prosperous.

“ ‘I can say, from experience, that I never knew what real comfort was, till I got rid of all angry passions; while, by endeavouring to conform myself to the likeness of him, who was ‘meek and lowly in heart,’ I have indeed found true rest unto my soul.

“ ‘We were now got into such comfortable circumstances, that Margaret began again to save money; Mrs. Martin entirely provided for the house; and, as my daughter still took in a good deal of work, and neither she nor Ann ever spent a shilling in vanity, or an hour in idleness, it was not long before she got a little sum together, and began to consult with me about putting Peter to a trade, in which his lameness would be no hindrance to him. She thought of a tailor or a shoemaker; but, when we talked to him about it, he expressed such a love of learning and his books, and indeed had made such a progress in them, that, after much thinking, and consulting Mrs. Martin, we made him quite happy

by agreeing that he should be brought up for a schoolmaster. As soon as this was fixed, he was sent to a very good school in town, whither he walked every morning, with the help of his crutches, taking his dinner with him, and returning at night. At the end of the year, his master offered him his board and a small present, if he would assist him in teaching; a proposal which you may be sure we gladly agreed to: he raised his present to five guineas the next year; and on those terms, still improving himself, he continued with him till last Christmas, when he had an offer made him, from the master of a very large school in the next county, of his maintenance and twenty guineas a year. He gladly accepted of this, and took with him an excellent character from his old master, who rejoiced at his advancement, saying, he deserved a better salary than he could afford to give him.

“ ‘We have twice heard from him since he went, and he is delighted with his new situation, where he has already begun to gain friends, and hopes soon to send home a little sum of money for Margaret to keep for him till he can save more, and put it out to interest. O! William, how has the Almighty showered down blessings upon me since I turned my heart to him!’ When Peter was made a cripple for life, who could have thought of his being such a happy youth, and such a comfort to his family! But thus it is that our kind Father brings good out of evil; nothing, indeed, can be evil to those who love him; for afflictions are only trials of that love, and those who receive them thankfully, as such, shall come out like gold, purified by the fire.

“ ‘For nine years did we live in the happy manner I have been describing, when it pleased God to take our good friend Mrs. Martin to himself: her illness was short, and she had every comfort in it which this world could bestow. Mrs. Wright and my-

daughter were constantly with her, and she many times thanked Margaret for the manner in which she had borne with a temper which she was now fully sensible might, and ought to have been got the better of; and, putting her will into Mr. Wright's hand, she said, 'You will find, here, that I have tried to make this excellent woman some amends for the pains she has taken to make the latter years of my life comfortable.'

" 'Her death, which happened a few hours after, threw us into real affliction; for she was a worthy woman, and we all loved her. The day after the funeral, my daughter was sent for to Mr. Wright's, to be present at the opening of the will; when, to her great surprise, she found that she had a legacy of five hundred pounds, besides all the valuable furniture of the house, and her clothes, watch, and whatever else belonged to her here.

" 'Poor Margaret was quite overpowered by this generosity; she would have fainted, had not a violent burst of tears come to relieve her full heart. As soon as she was able to speak, 'O, it is too much, too much,' said she; 'my dear departed mistress has made me unhappy by the excess of her goodness!' Mr. and Mrs. Wright comforted her in the kindest manner, and, assuring her that they were perfectly pleased and satisfied with what their aunt had done, bid her look upon it as a bounty sent by God, to enable her to make her blind father happy in the end of his days.

" 'In short, they behaved as the best of friends, and immediately paid her the whole sum, without even deducting the legacy-tax. My dear girl was as generous-hearted as they, and would not be satisfied till Mrs. Wright consented to accept of the gold watch, some rings, and a few of the best clothes: out of the rest, she completely fitted out Ann for service, and our worthy minister's wife recommended

her to a place. She is now with her mistress in London; and we have every reason to hope, from her letters, that she is firmly resolved to follow Margaret's example, and be constantly upon her guard against the many temptations which surround an innocent young woman in a large family of servants.

" 'And now, dear William,' continued the good old man, 'I shall have finished my story when I have told you, that the five hundred pounds is put out to interest, and my dear daughter continues as attentive as ever to her daily work, except that she now allows herself time to read to me in an evening; and, when the weather is fine, she often makes me lean upon her arm to enjoy the warm sun-shine in the garden. She has now the power, too, to help her poor neighbours with more than her prayers and good advice, and never fails to visit the sick with food and medicines, and the afflicted with kind consolation; zealously endeavouring to turn the hearts of all to Him, who is the only sure refuge in time of trouble.

" 'Soon after she came into possession of this money, she told me she was resolved to write to the mother of George, who was half sister to my first dear wife, and for whom Margaret had often heard her express a great regard; and I believe it is her intention, if they are deserving of it, to divide what she dies possessed of, between that family and my two children, who already owe her much more than riches could make them amends for the loss of; for she has taught them so firmly to fix their hopes upon a better world, that I trust no temptation which this can offer will ever entice them from that straight and narrow path which leads to everlasting life.' "

Here William finished relating the old man's story, but went on with his account in the following manner:—"I was so struck with all which I had just heard, that I could think of nothing else for many

days and nights. I talked much of it to George; and, thinking it would make a deeper impression upon him, got Mr. Wilmot to repeat it to him the very first time he had an opportunity by his daughter's absence. He was, at the time, a good deal affected by it, and I thought he afterwards paid more attention to what Mrs. Wilmot said: but I know not whether from the hardness or the giddiness of his disposition, nothing that he hears seems to reach his heart: he agrees that what you say is good and right; but the moment he gets amongst those who have no religion, you can scarcely see any difference between him and them, and you would not think he had ever read a good book, or heard a good sermon, in his life.

"Soon after this time, a respectable old lady, with a niece, who waited upon her, came to lodge at Mrs. Wilmot's; so George and I were unwillingly obliged to agree for a room in a house hard by: but we still continued to spend every evening, and the whole of Sunday, with the excellent old man and his daughter; for whom I at this moment feel all the tender affection, which the best of fathers and of sisters could claim from me."

At this moment, Sarah, rising up, suddenly caught hold of William's hand, and bursting into tears; "I now see, my dear son," cried she, "what you meant by the new master whom we were all to serve! God is that great and noble master, who makes such offers to us all. And, O my children, let us instantly resolve to accept them! Let our little family, at least, withdraw itself from the vices and vanities of the world, and devote our lives to his service!" "I do, I do," cried Mary, throwing herself into her mother's arms: Richard and James arose, and, giving each a hand to William, were too much affected to speak. He embraced them both; and, falling on his knees, all the rest following his example;

"O merciful Father!" he cried, "look down upon

us with favour; strengthen and confirm in our hearts the resolutions which we now make to give ourselves to thee. Let us be of that happy number, who choose the Lord for their God, and make it the business of their lives to obey his laws. O let us not fall back into carelessness and sin; but may we bear in mind, through every future day and hour, the glorious purpose for which we were made: that we are citizens of a heavenly country, and waiting for that blessed call which will conduct us through the gates of death to those happy mansions, where our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ is now preparing to receive his true followers. And O, Almighty God! bestow upon us a portion of that holy spirit which thou gavest to good men in old times, to the Apostles of the blessed Jesus, and to Jesus himself without measure; that our affections may be raised above this present world, and we may be able at all times steadily to resist its temptations. So shall we be of that 'little flock,' to whom it is thy good pleasure to give the kingdom."

After a pause of some moments, they all arose; and William, with a countenance beaming with pleasure, said, "I cannot express how happy you have made me by your acceptance of the great offers which I returned home on purpose to make known to you!"

"They were glad tidings, indeed, that you brought us, my son," cried Sarah, "I had often read in the Bible, and heard many sermons; but I read and heard like a child, without ever reflecting upon it afterwards: till now, I never knew what religion was; I feel that it changes every thought of the heart. All the follies and vanities of the world seem now as nothing to me: I have but one wish, and that is to gain the favour of God. Tell me, my dear children, do you feel this change in yourselves?"

"I hope and trust that I do," replied Richard; "but I fear to say too much, lest my old thoughts

and inclinations should return, which would make me miserable; for I am well convinced, by all that William has said, and what my own heart tells me, that there is no true happiness but in serving God."

"You have spoken just what I think," said James, "and I will struggle hard against falling back to what I have been. I have freely chosen my master, and I hope steadily to obey him."

"Do but that, my brothers," cried William, "while this short life, which we may call our day of work, continues, and then we shall all be called to our master's glorious home, where we shall be received, not as servants, but as children; 'heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ,' to inherit with him, each in proportion to his desert, the rewards of the heavenly kingdom. Come, my sister," continued he, "I trust that you will be one of the first in this glorious race; are you prepared to cast away all follies and vanities, and to press forward towards the mark?"

"It shall be the business of my life," replied she, "to imitate that best of women, of whom you have been telling us; I will go to the first creditable place that I can hear of, and do my utmost to behave exactly as she did at Mrs. Wright's. If God blesses me with health, I shall gain friends, and put by money to help you, dear mother, in sickness and old age: the great pleasure of my life shall be doing my duty, and coming home now and then, to learn it better and better, by talking to my dear William."

So happy was this little family, and so delighted with their new plan of life, that they hardly knew how to part for the night; but, as it grew late, William took a book from his pocket in which Mrs. Wilmot had written a number of excellent prayers: they all kneeled down, and besought God to strengthen their good resolutions; after which they retired to that sweet repose, which is reserved

for those who trust in an all-powerful and ever-wakeful Protector.

The next morning, they met in the same happy temper that they had parted the night before. William had desired his mother to prepare coffee for breakfast, because it was a rule to have it on a Sunday at Mrs. Wilmot's. They were all neatly dressed; but Mary surprised them by wearing an old bonnet, while a very showy one, which she had bought a few weeks before, was in her hand. "Rejoice with me, my brother," said she, "for I am really changed: last Sunday I was delighted with this gay bonnet, and proud to wear it; but, when I put it on this morning, I was displeased with its finery; I felt sure, that Mrs. Wilmot, at my age, would not have worn it; nor will I again, till it is made up in a manner better suited to my present liking."

"How much shall I love you, my dear sister," said William, "if you go on as you have begun! A young woman who can root out vanity from her heart, has taken away one of the greatest temptations to evil."

They reached the neighbouring town in good time for morning service; and all, except William, who had often felt it before, were surprised at the effect which the prayers and sermon had upon their hearts.

They had often heard the same minister, but were never before in so proper a state of mind to be edified by what he said: they talked of it all the way home, and, as soon as dinner was over, were impatient to set out again, that they might renew the same delightful feelings.

While Mary was preparing their coffee in the evening, an old companion of Richard's came in to ask him if he would come for an hour to the Bell, where two or three of their friends were just gone to spend a cheerful evening.

"No," answered Richard, "I never intend spending another sixpence in a public-house; and of all evenings Sunday is the last that I would choose for the purpose."

"Hey-day! why, what's the matter now?" said Tom; "you were there but this day seven-night, as merry as the best of us; and pray what has got into your wise head that you cannot come to-day?"

"Why, I am very much changed, I hope, since that time," replied Richard; "I have been twice to-day publicly praying God to forgive my past sins, and enable me to lead a better life in future; and I will not finish the day by adding to their number."

"Come, Thomas," said William, "sit down, and spend a sober hour with us."

"Not I, i'faith," returned he; "you shall never make a canting milksop of me; so, good bye, Dick, we shall have good fun in talking of thee at the Bell to-night."

"With all my heart," replied Richard; "you may tell all who are there, that I am become a Christian; and, by God's assistance, I hope in future to behave something like one."

On this, Thomas burst into a loud laugh; and, again telling him what diversion it would make at the Bell, left them.

"How glad I am that he is gone!" cried Mary: "why did you ask him to come in? It would have spoiled our happy evening."

"I asked him," answered William, "because we ought to try all means to prevent others from doing what is wrong; and if he had sat down with us, he might have heard something that would be useful to him. But," turning to Richard, "you have acted nobly, my dear brother; many young men are prevented from doing right, by the fear of being laughed at; unmindful of what is said by our blessed Teacher, 'Whosoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of

him shall the son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his father!" But you have shewn a courage which delights my heart. Do you, James, but follow his example, and we shall be the happiest family in the world."

"Do not doubt but I will," replied James: "I am proud of the service that I have entered into; and I wish all who know me, to know who is my master."

"You are right," said William; "if bad men make a jest of us, we will pity and endeavour to convert them. We must expect that the profligate will persecute us for a time, and especially that our old companions will try to make us ashamed of being like nobody else, as they will call it: 'if we were of the world, the world would love its own;' but, as we are determined to pursue steadily the straight road which leads to life, regardless of the difficulties or the derision that we may meet in our way, the bad part of it will envy and hate us. But, instead of fearing let us covet this noble distinction! Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, remembering the glorious reward which is annexed to it, 'Happy are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for their's is the kingdom of Heaven.'"

"O William," cried Sarah, "what a happy mother you have made me! Well might you say that you had brought home good news! But now that you all have delighted my heart, by the pious resolutions you made, let me tell you, that I intend not only to worship God from my heart, which I can hardly say that I ever did till last night, but to be much more useful and comfortable to my dear children than I have ever yet been. Our house shall be as clean as Mrs. Wilmot's; and I will endeavour to be as kind and industrious, though I can never be as good and wise as she is. I, like her poor father, have lost much precious time in my past life; but

I also will make all the amends in my power, by diligently employing every hour that is left."

"Dear, dear mother," said William, "your happiness shall be the study of our lives. I have a proposal to make, which I hope all here will gladly agree to; and it is, that we three brothers each put a shilling a week into a box for ourselves, and sixpence for you: Mary, who will not get as much wages as we, may put half as much. When there is ten pounds in the box, it may be put out to interest, which will add ten shillings a year to the stock. I intend that each of us, when he marries, shall take his own share, but leave his mother's, which is to be entirely her own, to do what she pleases with; and, if she lives to see us all married, it will enable her to live with which of us she pleases; and we shall feel the delight of having made a provision for the latter years of that dear parent, who toiled for us when we were able to do nothing for ourselves. I am now twenty-three, and am fully resolved not to marry till I am thirty; by which time my own share from the box will be more than twenty pounds: this will buy furniture for a house; and, as I hope to meet with a prudent young woman, who will also have saved something, we shall have a little bank to begin with. If you will agree to do the same, what comfortable prospects shall we have before us, even in this world, besides our glorious expectations in the next!"

"I agree to it most heartily," said Richard; "and, as I shall go no more to the Bell, I am sure I shall be able to save more than eighteen-pence a week; twice as much is soon gone in a public-house."

"And when we are at task-work," cried James, "we can easily spare another shilling: besides, there is harvest time; when if we agree with our master for a moderate quantity of liquor, which I am resolved always to do, our gains in money will be very great."

"And I," said Mary, "hope to be as good a servant, as dear and useful to my mistress, as Mrs. Wilmot was; and you remember how much she saved while she was at Mr. Wright's."

"O my dear children," said Sarah, with her eyes full of tears, "you overpower me with your goodness: all that I can say is, that I will do my best to assist you; I will spin for your liden and knit your stockings, and I will continually pray to the Almighty to bless and reward you for your great kindness to me."

They were all very much affected, and William replied, "Whatever we do for you, dear mother, will be a happiness to ourselves. I have no doubt," said he to his brothers, "that, if God grants us health, we shall be able to put by more than the sum I mentioned: for the harvest, to sober men, is a very profitable time; and, by taking task-work, we may sometimes gain a great deal: if so, at any time we have a crown or half-a-guinea a-piece, that we can spare, we may agree and put it together into the box: but I propose this eighteen-pence a week as a regular thing, never to be broken into, unless our great Master thinks proper to send sickness or any other calamity that we cannot prevent; in which case, the money that is wanting shall be taken from our little store as freely as the good Margaret's was, when her father and his family were in distress, and must have been lost without her help.

"And, O my mother, my brothers, and my sister," continued he, "how happy shall we all be, if we keep steadily to the resolutions we have made to-day! The blessings of the Almighty will be upon us, and upon all that we have: our house will be founded upon a rock, and no storms can ever shake it. Our minds will rest securely, knowing that we have chosen the good part which cannot be taken away from us. Whatever troubles may befall us in this

world, our thoughts, our hopes and wishes, will be so firmly fixed upon the next, that no sorrow of heart can reach us. We shall look forward, like the old man and his daughter, to the hour of death, as the happy end of our labours and trials: it has no terrors to those who hate sin: no, it is the gate through which they pass to heaven. No earthly master can make us any offers worthy to be compared with those which we glory in accepting; for if we had all the riches this world can bestow, we must in a few years grow old, die, and leave it: but, in recompense for the steady obedience of a life, which may be very short, and cannot be long, we are promised a 'Crown of glory, which fadeth not away;' a dwelling-place with Him, in whose presence 'there is fulness of joy, and at whose right-hand there are pleasures for evermore.' "

THE writer of this history would fain hope, that many, who are in similar situations with William Seymour and his family, will, by reading it, be induced to enter into the same service, and make the same happy choice that they did. Their great Master makes the same glorious offers to all; and it is strange that there should be found amongst us, any one so mad and foolish as to reject them; yet, I grieve to say it, there are many such: many, who prefer the low servitude of a life of sin, with its wages of misery and death, to an honourable and delightful obedience to the commands of an all-gracious Father, who will reward the service of a short life, sincerely devoted to him, with perfect and never-ending felicity.

Surely no young man would wish to imitate the early part of Mr. Wilmot's life, when he sees to what shame and wretchedness it brought him, even

in this world; and hears, from his own confession, that he was a thousand times happier when old and blind, and maintained by the labour of his daughter, than he had ever been in the days of his youth and health, when the world prospered with him, and he had all the means of comfort in his own power! But he was then the slave of his own wicked passions, and in such a state a man must be miserable, though all the wealth of the world was at his command.

I hardly need ask any young woman, which she would wish to resemble, Mr. Wilmot's second wife, whose boldness, vanity, violence, and vicious conduct, must have made her hateful to every reader; or his modest, humble, gentle, and pious daughter; who must be the delight of every feeling heart, and whose example will, I trust, be the means of leading many into the happy paths of peace and righteousness. Can there be a woman, who would not desire to be like her? If there be, I give her solemn warning, that she is far from the path of life, and call upon her instantly to repent and reform, if she would save her soul.

Before I conclude, let me earnestly intreat all my readers, to think seriously of the condition they are in: to ask themselves whether they are the true and faithful servants of God: whether it is the great object of their lives to do his work, or whether they are going thoughtlessly on, looking only to the mean pleasures and paltry advantages of the present day, and making no serious and regular preparation for that awful hour, to which we are all hastening, when "the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised," to a never-ending life! O that I could rouse all who are in this state of stupid carelessness, to a sense of their real condition! That they would be persuaded to think less of those things which are passing away, and more of what will endure to all eternity! That they would make it the business of

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VILLAGE DIALOGUES. *N^o.*

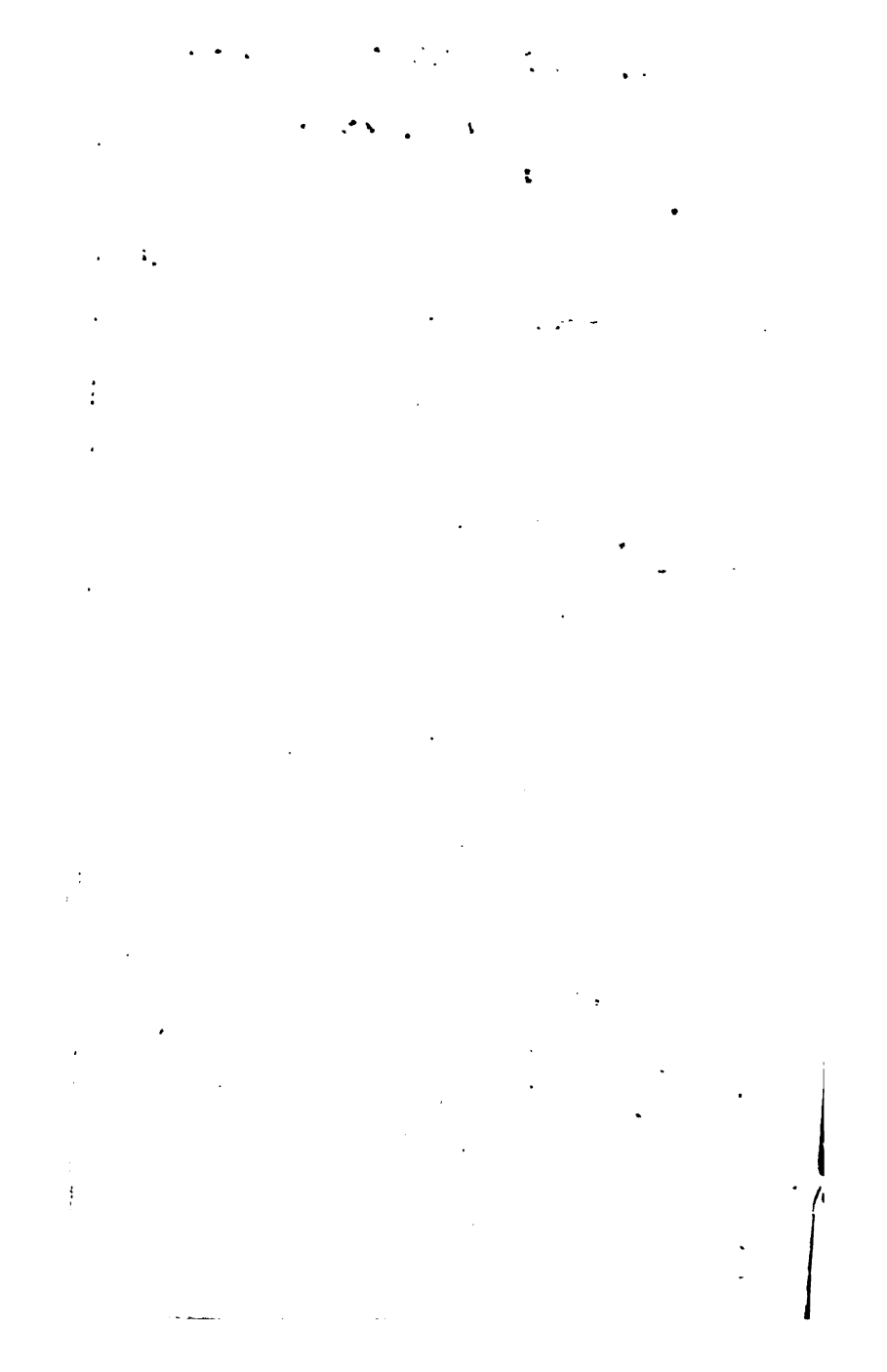
BY THE AUTHOR OF
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VILLAGE 'DIALOGUES.

PART I.

A WORTHY minister of the gospel, being early removed from the cares and trials of the present world, left a widow, and one daughter whom it had been a chief object of both their lives to train up as a child of immortality.

As her understanding opened, they often talked to her of God ; of his unbounded power, his unlimited goodness ; and taught her to look up to him as her Maker, her Preserver, her Father, and her Friend ; one who loved her more than any earthly parent could possibly do, and who, after she had remained in this world long enough to learn those christian virtues which would fit her for a better, would call her to that state, where the righteous will dwell in never-ending happiness.

When her young heart rejoiced in the communication of these delightful truths, they never failed to make her sensible that much was to be done on her own part ; that she must diligently strive to understand what God required from her, and bend her will in every thing to a cheerful submission to the holy precepts which he hath given us by his beloved son Jesus Christ. They took frequent opportunities to point out the beauty and excellence of these precepts, and in her blessed Saviour the bright example of one who exactly fulfilled them all,—who endured and resisted the most powerful temptations, who blessed those that cursed him, did good to those who hated him, and not only prayed for those who despitefully used him, but with his dying breath entreated forgiveness from his heavenly Father for these cruel men who persecuted him even to a shameful and torturing death.

Often would they speak of his resurrection from the grave, and ascension into those regions of happi-

her heart, no complaint proceeded from her lips ; yet she seemed in danger of falling, unawares to herself, into a state of melancholy.

From this however she was saved by that never-failing source of comfort to the human race, *true religion* ; which told her that she was still in a state of trial, and that life was doubtless continued to her for some good purpose both to herself and others.

She lived in a populous neighbourhood, and it was a time of scarcity among the poor, whose necessities she had all her life been in the habit of relieving to the utmost extent of her power. Indeed, she constantly denied herself many comforts and conveniences which others in her situation thought absolutely necessary, that she might be able more liberally to supply the wants of her suffering fellow-creatures.

After the death of her daughter, it is not surprising that her mind should be for a time too much occupied with her own griefs to suffer her to attend to those of her poor neighbours in the manner she was used to do : but in the course of a few weeks she began to accuse herself of a neglect of duty ; and hearing that a labourer who lived near had been dangerously ill, and was still confined to his room, she resolved no longer to indulge the indolence both of body and mind, which sorrow is too apt to bring upon us, but to endeavour to lighten its load by striving to console one who was also afflicted, though from a cause unlike her own. This resolution was no sooner formed than begun to be executed : she entered into the cottage of the sick man ; and after tenderly inquiring into the particulars of his complaint, and promising to send him nourishment such as she perceived his case required, the following dialogue passed between them.

Lady. I most truly compassionate your sufferings, Thomas, and wish to do all in my power to enable you to bear them patiently till God sees it the proper

time to relieve you. Are you desirous to do this? and do you pray earnestly to him for support in this time of hard trial?

Thomas. I pray God to put an end to my pain, or to take me out of this world, for I am weary of my life.

Lady. You say that you are weary of this life; but are you sure that you shall be happier in another? Are you prepared to die by having led a holy and virtuous life? Should you not rather pray for added days and years, to give you time and opportunity to get the better of your sins, before you are called to the last solemn account?

Thomas. Yes, yes, I have many sins; but we are all sinful, and I hope the Lord will have mercy upon us all.

Lady. The sins of other people, my friend, are what neither you nor I have any concern with, unless we could persuade them to repent. But we ought to set in earnest about getting rid of our own: God is merciful to all who truly turn to him, and forsake their evil ways; but "he is a God of judgment," and will not let the wicked go unpunished.

Thomas. Whatever my sins are, it is too late to undo them now, and I have been no worse than my neighbours.

Lady. Let me again remind you, that your neighbours having been as bad, or worse than yourself, will do nothing towards excusing you. All men are required to live soberly, honestly, and righteously in this world; and each must give an account of his own deeds. If you have led an unholy and immoral life, your punishment will not be the less because many others have done the same.

Thomas. That may be: but I cannot help what is past, and I hope the Lord will have mercy on my poor soul.

Lady. God is always merciful, always ready to hearken to the prayer of the truly penitent. But he

will not receive into his glorious presence one who dies in his sins ; one whose heart is not changed, and who, if his health was restored, would return again to the same evil course of life.

Thomas. I thank God I have never wronged any one, but have worked hard, and lived hard, for many a long year.

Lady. If you have been strictly honest in all your dealings, that is a great and material point ; but in other things I fear you have not done so well : have you led a sober life ?

Thomas. Why, I cannot say much as to that. But I had no comfort at home, with my wife and her children.

Lady. You married a widow with a young family, which it was your own choice to do ; and from the day in which you became her husband, it was your duty to have been the kind and affectionate father of her children. Unless you intended to do this, you ought not to have married their mother. I fear you have grudged their necessary maintenance, and that has caused unhappiness between you and your wife.

Thomas. I was a fool to marry as I did ; but I have suffered enough for it.

Lady. Your sufferings have proceeded chiefly from your own bad conduct, which I feel it my duty, if possible, to convince you of ; for, unless you can be made fully sensible of your faults, it is impossible that you should repent and reform. Had you acted as a good man and a christian, you would have taken the poor fatherless children under your tenderest care, and encouraged your wife to be a true mother to them. The money which you have spent in public houses would have fed and clothed them comfortably ; they would have grown up under your roof, and loved you as a father ; nay, would perhaps have felt more affection and gratitude towards you than your own children will ever do, because you had done more for them than they could strictly demand at your hands.

The poor girl whom, while yet a child, you drove from your house, might now have been your nurse and comforter ; and the boy who has just enlisted, if you had set him a good example, made his home comfortable, and had him taught to read his Bible and keep holy the Lord's day, might now have been a prop and support to you, helping to maintain both his mother and yourself.

Thomas. You take their parts too much, madam : it is a hard thing to be obliged to labour for other people's children.

Lady. If you thought so, you ought not to have made it your duty by marrying their mother. But believe me, if you had conducted yourself towards them as a kind friend, instead of a cruel enemy, you would not at this moment have been a shilling the poorer for such generosity. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth," says the wise king Solomon ; and the reason of this plainly is, that God gives a blessing to the labours of the good man ; what he has goes far, and holds out ; while vice wastes and destroys the substance of the ungodly.

Thomas. Well, perhaps I have been wrong ; but my wife is of such a temper as would drive any man to a public house for peace and quietness.

Lady. Ah, Thomas ! you did not find her temper bad till you made her unhappy. It was your drunkenness, and your harsh treatment of her children, that made her what she is. An industrious, kind, and religious master of a family may make his wife and children almost what he pleases ; as such a one will be careful to marry no one who has not in all respects a good character. But what right has a man, who lives as you have done, to hope for a kind and obliging wife ? Can she love or regard a husband who comes home to her two or three nights in the week in a state of brutal intoxication ? one who spends half the hard-earned wages of his labour to make himself feel and appear like a fool, or a mad-

man ! There are women of so truly christian a spirit as to continue kind and gentle even to such men as these : but no one has a right to expect it from his wife, or to blame her when it is otherwise ; nor can I pity any man for a misery which he thus wilfully brings upon himself.

Thomas. I believe I have been to blame in many things ; but it is now all over, and I am too old to mend.

Lady. O do not say so, do not think so. While life remains there is time for repentance and amendment. Who knows whether God may not yet restore your health, and grant you many more years in this world ? And if you can be brought to view your past conduct in its true light, if your eyes can be opened to see how hateful and destructive a thing sin is, and to be fully sensible how guilty you have been, I should yet have strong hopes of your becoming a good and happy man.

Believe me, to see such a change taking place in you, or any other fellow creature, would be one of the greatest pleasures of my life.

Thomas. Ah ! madam you were always good, so was your dear daughter. But for her and your kind care and bounty, my poor lad would never have got through his fever. It must also have broken your heart to part with Miss Fanny.

Lady, wiping her eyes. She was indeed a dear and good child ! But I have a solid comfort in knowing that she was *fit to die*. Though her life was short, it had answered the great and glorious purpose for which it was bestowed. She was ripe for heaven ! and God took her before she had known the cares and sorrows which attend a long pilgrimage through this world of trial.

Thomas. Her being so good made it a hard thing to part with her.

Lady. At the time, perhaps, it did increase my grief ; but now it is my hourly source of consolation

and thankfulness. I continually reflect that, were she now alive, she might in many different ways be made unhappy, and even be drawn aside by some great temptation to offend her God! for who are secure from sin during their abode on earth? But she is now removed from every sorrow, safe from every danger! She has finished a virtuous course; and, through the infinite love and mercy of her Creator, there is laid up for her "a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

O my friend, though you see me weep, I know that I have reason to rejoice; and believe me, my heart is thankful that my dear husband and daughter are in the happy number of those who have died "in the Lord," and will have their part in the glorious resurrection of the just. "As Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise *first*."

Thomas. O madam, I could hear you for ever! It is no wonder that you are so good, when you are continually looking for such glorious things. How dreadful is the thought of being miserable, while all the righteous are raised to eternal happiness by their blessed master! It chills one's heart to think of it.

Lady. Think often, my friend, of the heavy punishments which the scriptures pronounce on the ungodly: and then reflect upon the glorious prospect which the morning of the resurrection will open to the righteous;—an eternity of blessedness, which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath ever entered into the heart of man to conceive!" This happiness, this glory, is opened to *you*, to *every one*: And can it be possible for any human being to be so stupid, or so ungrateful, as to reject it? I see that you are shocked at the bare idea of such madness. Resolve then, by thoroughly reforming your heart and life,

to become one of the happy number who take the Lord for their God.

Thomas. O that I could promise to do this ! I know that it would be well for me here and hereafter ; but what is required is difficult, it is beyond my power.

Lady. God is too just and merciful to require from any one more than he has given him full power to perform. And for the difficulty, take courage, and fear no hardship that can meet you in that path where the Lord is your helper and your firm support. Remember the words of our heavenly teacher, "He that will come after me, let him take up his cross daily and follow me." If your wife is violent and unreasonable, if your children are perverse and ill-tempered, think of the evil example which you have hitherto set them, and look upon the vexation it gives you, as the *cross* that your own bad conduct has brought upon you, and which it is your duty patiently to bear.

If you will steadily resolve to do this, doubt not but God will by degrees lighten your burden by making a religious life delightful to yourself, and softening the hearts of all around you. How widely different towards you will the feelings of your family be, when you come home at the end of the week, with kindness in your heart and on your lips, and your full wages in your pocket, to buy whatever is wanting for yourself and them ! How different a being will you appear in their eyes ! Instead of a foolish, brutish, quarrelsome creature, reeling home from his sottish companions to terrify and abuse his helpless family ; your little innocents will be eagerly watching at the door for the return of a tender and beloved father, who comes to rest from his labour by his own fireside, and enjoy a comfortable meal with his affectionate family : for an industrious and sober man can in the worst of times afford to have a comfortable meal, and to give his wife and children a full share of it.

Thomas. That would indeed be a happy life ; and there would be some encouragement for a man to aim at it, if he had a wife who kept her house in order, and brought up her children as a christian should do.

Lady. If you, my friend, will act a truly christian part, I can almost promise that yours shall do the same. When she sees that you are sorry for your past faults, and really desirous to make her and your children happy, she will by degrees become kind and grateful. But you must not look for this change at once : you will find by your own experience that it is hard to get the better of bad habits ; and must therefore have much patience with her and with your children. One of the difficult things you have to do, is, completely to conquer the violence of your own temper, which has been so long indulged that it will require many and hard struggles before it can be completely overcome. Yet this must be done before you can call yourself a disciple and follower of that master who was "meek and lowly of heart," whose yoke we must take upon us, and willingly bear, before his heavenly doctrines will give *rest unto our souls*.

Thomas. I thank you, madam, from my heart I thank you, for all that you have said, and wish that I had been so happy as to have heard it long ago, while I had youth and health to offer in the service of God and my fellow creatures : but at my time of life, it is hard to make the thorough change you talk of ; indeed I feel that it is past my power, beyond my reach.

Lady. Do not think so meanly of the abilities which a good and bountiful God has bestowed upon you. Let me again assure you that he asks from no one more than he gives him full power to perform ; which leaves the vicious man no cloak, no cover for his sins. He will not only graciously accept your sincere and humble endeavours to do his will, but he

has promised to assist those endeavours. If you forsake your sins, and come to him with all your heart, he will not only freely pardon what is past, but still hold out the mighty prize of *eternal life*, as within the reach of the truly penitent.

Thomas. Go on, dear madam, tell me more of the great work which I ought to undertake.

Lady. You are so happy as to have learnt to read, and that most precious of all books, the *New Testament*, lies on the table before you. While you are confined by your present weakness, make its contents your constant study; and if the Almighty should mercifully restore you to your former health and strength, I trust you will return to your labours an altered man.

All the doctrines and precepts which are necessary to the great work of your salvation, you will find plain, and easy to be understood: strictly conform your life to these, and do not trouble yourself about those passages which your want of learning may render difficult. Remember that "there is one God and one mediator between God and men;" that this beloved of God was sent into the world "to bless us by turning every one of us *from his iniquities*." Remember, too, "that God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained," even our Lord Jesus Christ; from whose sentence "every one will receive according to what he hath done in the body, whether it be good or evil." These texts are plain, that even the most ignorant can hardly mistake their meaning.

Thomas. Instruct me further with respect to what God expects and requires from me.

Lady. Our Lord himself shall instruct you. When asked by one of the Jews that great and momentous question, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" he said unto him, "What is written in the law? hast thou readest thou?" and he answering said, "Thou shalt

love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind ; and thy neighbour as thyself. And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast answered right : *This do, and thou shalt live.*"

Here, then, from Christ, the beloved and anointed of God, we learn what is required from us,—to love our Creator with all the powers which he hath bestowed upon us, and to strive earnestly to do good to our fellow creatures. Is there, in this, any thing too difficult for a man to perform ?

Thomas. It does not seem at all difficult when we talk about it ; but it is so unlike the ways of the world, so different from every thing that one sees and hears, and so many things happen every day to drive away good thoughts and provoke to bad ones, that, though I hope I shall never again be the man I have been, I fear I never shall be what I ought.

Lady. Are you fully convinced that to offend God is the greatest of all evils, that to lead a life of sin is the extreme of folly and madness, and that it would be well for you if this great change in your heart and conduct could be brought about ? Would you rejoice to find yourself in the path of righteousness, with the bright prospect of heaven direct before your view ?

Thomas. Ah ! madam, who would not rejoice to find himself in such a case ? But my heart fails me, it is beyond my reach, I cannot live up to it.

Lady. I will ask you one plain question. Suppose your master the rich Squire was to offer you the half of his great estate, if you would for *one week* lead a truly christian life ; thinking often of another world, and many times in a day praying for the help of God to assist you in preparing for it ; keeping yourself resolutely sober, bearing patiently with the faults of your wife and children, and doing all in your power to make them good and happy ; being industrious in your work, kind to your companions and neighbours, and seeking for opportunities to do them good : Tell

me, my friend, tell me when you have well considered the question, Could you lead this life for one week, if half the Squire's estate was to be your reward at the end of it?

Thomas, after thinking some time. Such a life would require a constant and strict attention to every thought, word, and action; one must never be for a moment off one's guard:—but yet, for *one week* I think I could so far master myself as to do it.

Lady. Well, if you can do it for *one week*,—you can do it for *two*: and if you can behave as a real christian for a fortnight,—surely, if the *reward was doubled*, you could for a month.

Thomas. Why, by degrees I should get more into the way of it, and perhaps might even go on for a month, if so much depended upon it.

Lady. Enough, enough, my friend. If you can be good for *one month* you can for *twelve*, and for your *whole life*: and, as you observe, you will every day get more into the way of it. At first it will require all the firmness and resolution that you are master of; but by degrees it will become easy, and then delightful. And for a reward—instead of an earthly possession, from which you must soon be removed by the cold hand of death, you will inherit a heavenly kingdom, “a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give at that day unto all that love his appearing.”

Thomas. O madam! you have conquered, you have convinced me. I see that, through the great mercy of God, even such a sinner as I, may by a thorough change of heart and conduct still hope to gain admittance into heaven: and by the assistance of his grace, if he grant me life, I will lose no time in setting about this great work. From what you have told me, and from what I knew before, I know much of what I ought to do; and by God's help I will learn the rest from that holy book. Every night and morning on my knees will I entreat his pardon of

my past sins, and many times in a day shall my heart pray to him for renewing grace. The poor children, whom I have cruelly driven from their mother's roof, shall in future have a home there; and by my patient kindness to my wife and infants, and my steady labour for their support, I will make them all the amends in my power for their past sufferings.

Lady. O Thomas! you make me weep, at the same time that you rejoice my heart. "If there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over every sinner that repenteth," shall not a fellow-creature partake in the pure delight?

Begin your christian course this very hour, and go on from day to day, from week to week, from month to month, till at length, in God's own good appointed time, you are called from "your work and labour of love," to inherit the glorious rewards prepared for his faithful servants. Keep heaven and eternal life in your thoughts, and as it were before your eyes, by suffering no day to pass without reading some portion of the holy scriptures. Lose no time in having your children taught to read, and in hours of leisure instruct them yourself, being careful always to do it with kindness, and making the employment a pleasure rather than a task.

Every night, before you sleep, closely examine yourself with respect to your behaviour through the day: and if all has been well; if you have kept evil at a distance, and more especially if you have had an opportunity of doing good to any fellow creature; pour out your heart in thankfulness to God, and close your eyes in peace under his assured protection. But if you have for a moment forgotten your duty, and suffered even a wicked thought to dwell upon your mind, or a rash word to proceed from your lips,—humble yourself before the throne of his mercy, and earnestly implore forgiveness of what is past,

and an increase of resolution to enable you in future to avoid the like offence.

Believe me when I again assure you, that when you have for a few weeks accustomed yourself to live this truly christian life, it will become easy, and in the end delightful; filling your heart with "that peace which passeth all understanding," which nothing that befalls us in this world can either give or take away.

Thomas. Say on, say on, dear lady. My heart softens as you speak; I feel that all your instructions are right and good, and I bless God for sending you to enlighten my mind, and show me the danger of the careless and sinful life which I have hitherto led.

Lady. I will say a few words on a subject of great importance,—your manner of spending the Lord's day; which, as it commemorates the resurrection of Christ, that glorious proof of the certainty of our own, should be kept as a time of rejoicing and thankfulness to God, and of improvement to ourselves and our families. Go with your wife and children to a place of public worship as often in the day as you have an opportunity to do: diligently attend to the prayers, and lift up your soul to him who made you. Let your worship be the worship of the heart, "in spirit and in truth." Bless him, praise him, thank him, and adore him, for the vast and unmerited bounty to which you owe all that you now have, and all that you still hope for.

Hearken attentively to the instruction which your minister gives you from the pulpit, and talk of it to your family when you return home; reminding them of the most useful parts, and trying to explain it to their understandings. Question your children respecting what they have heard, and praise and reward any proofs of their attention. Let all be done with such love and kindness, that the performance of religious duties may appear to them, what they really are, pleasant and delightful. As far as it is possible,

keep all worldly cares and troubles from intruding themselves into your mind on this day. Six days we are allowed, and indeed commanded, to "labour, and do all that we have to do;" but the seventh should be "kept holy unto the Lord our God," to study his written word, that we may gain a more perfect knowledge of his will, and to bless, praise, and thank him for all his goodness to us. When the season and the weather will permit, take your family between, or after, their religious services into the fields and gardens, that they may breathe the pure air, and admire the useful plants, and beautiful flowers, which are spread over the earth for our benefit and pleasure. If friends or neighbours are disposed to join your company, do not shun them, but strive to enter into such conversation as will lead their thoughts to that happier, better world, where a long, a glorious sabbath of unalloyed felicity is prepared for the children of God.

Thomas. O madam! every word that you say reaches my heart. I see that the path of righteousness is a glorious path; and whatever it costs me, I am resolved, with the help of God, to walk in it for the remainder of my life.

How blind have I been to my real interests and happiness, in living as I have done, as if all was over with us when we die, and there were no other world than this! Yet I knew the contrary, I knew that a time of solemn reckoning must come, though I went on from day to day, making no preparation for it, but rather by my most unchristian conduct, "heaping up wrath against the day of wrath:" and but for the goodness of God in sending you to me, I should too surely have so continued, till death seized upon me in the midst of my sins.

Lady. Bless, bless and praise his holy name, for thus awakening you to a sense of your duty, and a consciousness of your real condition; and bowing humbly down with me, implore his gracious help to strengthen and confirm your pious resolutions.

Here they both kneeled down, and the lady devoutly repeated the following prayer :

“ O most holy and merciful God ! accept the grateful thanks of him whom thou hast now called from a life of sin and darkness into the glorious light of thy gospel.

“ With the lowest humility he entreats thee to pardon his former wilful blindness ; his many and great offences : and grant him thy powerful help, that in the course of his future life he may return to them no more, but, by daily increasing holiness and virtue, prove that his repentance is sincere, and reconcile himself to thee, his Maker, his Preserver, and the Rock of his salvation !

“ As every passing day brings us nearer to the awful hour when “ the trumpet shall sound,” and the dead arise to judgment, may all thy children of mankind, by turning from their evil ways, and seeking thee with their whole hearts, prepare to meet the solemn sentence which will then be pronounced upon all the sons of men ! May we who now bow down before thee, so steadily resist the temptations that are in the world, and so diligently strive to obey the commands of our beloved Saviour, whom thou hast appointed to be “ the way, the truth, and the life,” that we may be received among the happy number of his faithful servants, and, through thy boundless goodness and mercy, enter with him, “ into the joy of our Lord !”

The lady arose from her knees greatly affected, and, promising soon to make the penitent another visit, left the cottage.

VILLAGE DIALOGUES.

PART II.

HOW delightful to a good mind is the consciousness of having performed a virtuous action! Even the endeavour to benefit a fellow creature is always reflected upon with approbation, though we have not been successful: but when our efforts seem to have prospered, when we believe that we have awakened the love of God in a heart which was before cold and insensible, and been employed in the blessed work of turning a sinner from the evil of his ways,—how grateful should we be to the Giver of all good, for making us the favoured instruments of his bounty to our brethren of mankind!

So joyful, so thankful, was the worthy widow as she walked home from Thomas's cottage. Her heart had not felt so light since the death of her beloved daughter; and after preparing a comfortable dinner for the poor man and sending it by the hands of her only servant, she sat down to her own with a degree of cheerfulness which gave a relish to her simple fare. In the evening she walked into her garden, which though not large was both pleasant and fruitful. Her late dear husband had delighted in it; and a Bible, with a few other favourite books, was kept in a summer-house, to which he used to retire for several hours every day, to read, write, and meditate upon the written word of God. In many a sweet summer evening did his wife and daughter go with him to this pleasant spot; and after reading some favourite passage in the *best of all books*, or hearing what he had last written to explain and enforce its precious contents, they would take their coffee, or the fresh fruits of their garden, with a degree of en-

joyment which is unknown to those who meet in spacious rooms, dressed in costly apparel, and partake of the most expensive delicacies. The object of these children of the world is merely amusement, and to while away the time which was lent them for far better purposes. They seek no improvement to their own minds, no benefit to their fellow creatures ; and often return from these useless meetings, tired and out of humour with themselves and their associates ! But with this wise and happy family it was never so : to their little retreat in the summer-house none were invited but dear friends ; those who carefully studied the precepts of Christ, and made his life the bright example of their conduct ; and nothing unpleasant could arise in a society where each in the true spirit of christian love and charity strove to promote the comfort and welfare of the rest.

After their afflicting loss, the widow and her daughter often visited the spot where they had received so many lessons of piety and virtue ; reading the books which their dear friend had most delighted in, and recollecting all that he had said and done in the happy and profitable hours they had there spent together ; which, though at first it cost them many tears, by degrees became one of the highest enjoyments of their lives. Since the death of her daughter, however, the sorrowful and lonely mother had never entered the place. But on the day that we are speaking of, while her heart was glowing with thankfulness to God for the great change which she trusted he had by her means wrought in the heart of the poor man, she found herself unexpectedly at the door ; and having the day before put the key into it, she called forth all her resolution, and entering, sat down upon a chair, nearly overpowered by the tender recollections which at that moment rushed upon her mind.

Happily, a flow of tears came to her relief ; and falling on her knees, “ support me, O my heavenly

Father!" she cried: "support her who desires to submit her will to thine, and humbly to own, that whatever thou doest is holy, just, and good. Grant me thy powerful help, that while thou seest fit to continue this my earthly pilgrimage, I may so perform the duties which thou requirest from me, that, when I am called hence, I may be found worthy to rejoin those whom thou lentest to be my comforters here, and with them may rejoice in the light of thy countenance for ever!"

After continuing some time in silent prayer, she arose revived and strengthened; and opening a Bible which lay on a table before her, at the cxvith psalm, with a delight and consolation which can only be conceived by a mind as pious as her own, read as follows:

"I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplication. The sorrows of death compassed me, I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul. Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful. The Lord preserveth the simple. I was brought low, and he helped me. Return unto thy rest, O my soul! for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living. I believed, therefore have I spoken, but I was greatly afflicted. What shall I render unto the Lord, for all his benefits towards me? I will receive the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord."

"Yes, heavenly Father," cried she, closing the book, "I here humbly offer unto thee the remainder of my life. May it be spent in thanking and adoring thee, and in doing good to my fellow creatures! So shall I every hour become more fitted to join the happy and glorious assembly of thy worshippers, in the courts above."

The rest of the evening was spent in reading and meditation, and she retired to sleep in a state of mind more composed and cheerful than she had enjoyed for many weeks before.

The following morning, after attending to the concerns of her little family, she went, as had been her practice in happier days, to walk and work in her garden. It had of late, like all her worldly affairs, been in a neglected state; but she now resolved to have it put into the neat order in which she loved to see every thing around her. The man who used to work in it was lately dead; but at the distance of a mile she heard of a person who was well skilled in the business, and resolved to go herself that morning and try to engage him.

She set out accordingly, and had nearly reached his house, when her ears were shocked with the voices of two women, who seemed to be quarrelling, and abusing each other in a shameful manner. She soon perceived a young woman whom she concluded to be the gardener's wife, and another of a very neat and creditable appearance, but much older. Their cottages were under the same roof; and on perceiving the lady coming towards them, each hastily retired into her own habitation. After stopping a few minutes to give the woman time to recollect herself, she entered the gardener's house, and told his wife what was the occasion of her coming. She appeared in a good deal of confusion, but answered with much civility, and, reaching a chair, begged she would be pleased to sit down and rest herself; for the morning was hot, and she appeared to be tired. The widow accepted her offer, and, desiring her to do the same, in a kind and gentle voice thus addressed her.

Lady. I am afraid you do not live on friendly terms with your next-door neighbour, which must be a great cause of unhappiness to you both.

Sarah. Why, indeed, madam, I cannot say that

I do. It is impossible to live peaceably by such a one as she is. I am sure I do my best, but there is no bearing every thing.

Lady. Tell me what it is that you have to bear, and I shall then perhaps be able to give you some advice which may be useful to you.

Sarah. Why, madam, I have a large family of children, and they will sometimes be playful and unlucky, for I cannot be always with them to keep them out of mischief: so they now and then do some little damage to the garden or poultry of these covetous, proud people. And when any thing of that sort happens, she is so cruel to the poor things, and so abusive to me!

Lady. What kind of woman is she in other respects? her appearance is neat and decent.

Sarah. O yes! she can well afford to appear decent. Both she and her husband saved a great deal of money while they were in service, and they have two good cows, and plenty of every thing about them.

Lady. So far they are highly to be commended, and I wish many others would follow so good an example. There are no young men or women who might not save money while in service, if they were prudent, and began in time. And by that means they might begin a married life with credit and comfort; have convenient furniture for their houses; and perhaps buy a cow, or set up in any small way of business that they were able to carry on: or, if nothing of that kind offered, how comfortable would it be to a young couple to have a small sum out at interest; to which, before their family grew large, they might every year be adding something! This would enable them to give their children good schooling, and afterwards to put them well out in the world, besides keeping something for their own support in sickness or old age.

Sarah. I believe, madam, you say truly; but I had no thoughts of that kind. My wages from first to last would do no more than keep me in clothes;

for I loved dress, and tried to make as good an appearance as other girls in my station, and I married before I was two-and-twenty.

Lady. Too many act in the giddy manner that you have done. But had you continued a few years longer in service, and taken pains to make yourself useful and do your duty ; if you had taken a pleasure in doing this, rather than in dressing fine, you would have been valuable to your mistress, have deserved higher wages, and, if you lived in a good family, have had opportunities of improving both your disposition and understanding ; which would have made you more fit to bring up and instruct these little innocents whom God has committed to your care.

Sarah. Ah, madam ! the troubles and sorrows that I have gone through have now convinced me of my folly. But before they came I was thoughtless and high-spirited. I married hastily, and have known little but care and hardship ever since. Yet I dearly love my children, and would give the world to be able to teach them to read : but my mother was a widow, and too poor to have me taught while young, and I foolishly threw away the only opportunity that offered afterwards.

Lady. Tell me in what services you spent the younger part of your life.

Sarah. My father had worked for many years for Mr. Brown, who holds the manor farm under the squire ; and as soon as I was old enough to be useful, Mrs. Brown took me to be under the dairy-maid ; and in different places in this family I continued for six years. We had constant business from morning till night ; but I had good health, and went on cheerfully, though, as I said before, my wages never did more than find me in clothes.

Lady. Did your mistress never give you good advice, or instruct you in your duties to God, to her, and to yourself ?

Sarah. She never gave me any instruction except

in the way of my business, nor any advice but to be diligent in getting forward with my work.

Lady. Had you no family prayers? and did she never call you into the parlour on Sunday evenings to hear a sermon?

Sarah. I never heard a prayer or a sermon in the house during the whole six years that I lived in it. To be sure we went in turn to church; but I was always obliged to be up early, and do a good deal of work before I set out; and we had a mile and a half to walk; so that when I came to sit down and hear reading, I could hardly ever keep myself awake.

Lady. This was a cruel neglect in your mistress: she had grown-up daughters too, who had been at good schools; did they never attempt even to teach you to read?

Sarah. Ah, madam! though my mistress was notable, and looked into every thing, the young ladies were too proud to care any thing about us servants. Sunday was more than any other a day of company and pleasure at our house; and when the family spent it from home, as they sometimes did, all was a scene of idleness and noise: we all did just what we pleased; and I can truly say, that instead of the best it was often to us the very worst day in the week.

Lady. Such a master and mistress will, I fear, be brought to a heavy account for their unchristian neglect of the many ignorant young persons who have from time to time lived under their roof, and been committed to their care. Was this the only family in which you lived?

Sarah. No; one of my fellow-servants hired herself in town to be chambermaid at the Eagles: I had always been fond of this girl, for she was lively, and I thought very good-natured; for whenever I had broken any thing, or offended my mistress in any way, she was sure to invent some excuse to bring me off; which at the time I thought very kind, though

I believe it was hurtful to me from the first, and you will hear what came of it afterwards.

Lady. No good ever came of falsehood and deceit. At the time, if it is not found out, it may seem to save us from pain, and forward our wishes. But the word of God declares that "the lip of truth shall be established; while a lying tongue is but for a moment."

Sarah. Well, madam, this Jenny, whom I thought so much my friend, came to our wakes, and told me so much of the pleasant lives that servants led in town, that I agreed for her to get me a place there. One soon offered; and as I had lived so many years in my last, and had a fair character, I was hired. Jenny told me that it was not quite such a one as she wished, but I need only stay there till I could get a better: for as my mistress was a middle-aged lady, who kept but little company, and only one servant, she feared it would be dull: but as her house was in the very next street to the Eagles, I might run to her whenever I had a little spare time, and should always find some diversion going on there.

I found my new mistress one of the best of women. Her fortune was not large, yet she gave a great deal more in charity than Mrs. Brown, who had so much under her hand. She often visited the poor too, particularly when they were sick, and we were continually cooking broths and other nourishing things for them. She had easy remedies for burns, scalds, and bruises, which, though cheap, never failed to cure.

She was not only good in one or two things, however, but in every thing. I had not been three days in the house before she began to teach me to read; and from that time she never let a day pass without a lesson, even if I had only time to stay ten minutes. Several young friends and relations used to come in turns to visit her, so that she was seldom a week together alone; yet hardly a day passed in which I

was not called into the parlour to hear her or one of the young ladies read in the Bible or some other good book ; which, as my mistress always stopped to explain the parts that I did not understand, soon became very pleasant to me. She read such fine prayers too, that, had it not been for Jenny, who filled my head with abundance of other things, I should have gone to bed every night resolving to do my duty upon earth, that I might hereafter be a saint in heaven.

Lady. And is it possible that this wicked girl, for I can call her by no better name, should have such power over you, as to render all your excellent mistress's endeavours to serve you useless ?

Sarah. Not so, madam ; for to what I learnt from her, I owe my escape from the deepest guilt and ruin. She impressed upon my mind such a dread of acting wickedly, that I firmly resolved never to do it, and prayed earnestly to God that he would " deliver me from evil : " but I foolishly thought there could be no harm in going now and then to chat with Jenny at the Eagles ; and I had been so used all my life to making false excuses, that I almost persuaded myself that they were harmless ; and, though I every day told my mistress some trifle that was not true, should have been enraged with every one who had called me a liar.

Lady. In this manner, my good Sarah, do too many go on, wavering between " God and Mammon ; " shutting their eyes upon their faults, and walking as it were on the edge of a dangerous pit, till some great temptation comes, and they fall into it.

Sarah. Often and often has my dear mistress talked to me as you now do ; and sometimes on a Sunday, when our good minister exhorted us to come with willing hearts to Christ, and, by earnestly striving to do the will of his heavenly Father, acknowledge him for our Saviour ; when he has told us how pure and

how perfect a true Christian life must be, the tears have rolled down my cheeks ; and my chief sin rising up before me, I would resolve never to be guilty of another falsehood ; and I think I should have kept my resolution, but for one of those great temptations which you have just mentioned.

I became acquainted with a young man who was waiter at the Eagles ; he was also very intimate with Jenny ; and, pretending to be attached to me, told me that he had an uncle who could give him a great sum of money, with which he hoped soon to take a public house, and set up for himself. This I thought was a fine prospect for me ; and as I very much liked him, I went to the Eagles more than ever, and of course had continual occasion for my lying excuses to account for my frequent absences from home.

Andrew told me that as his uncle must know nothing of our intended marriage, he could not come to see me with the knowledge of my mistress, but pressed me very much to admit him privately, which I at first refused to do : but as he complained of it as a great hardship, and I was loth to lose so good a match, I at last agreed that he should sometimes come in an evening, if he would go away before supper-time ; for I resolutely denied to let him come at night, though he said it was the only time he could conveniently be spared : but I knew that would ruin my character, and make even my lover think lightly of me.

Well, madam, I went on, as you justly observe, halting between God and Mammon, for many weeks : my conscience often told me that I was doing wrong ; but Jenny and Andrew laughed at my scruples, and said I should never rise in the world by following the old-fashioned advice of such a one as my mistress. I well knew, however, that she was right, and they wrong ; but I hoped to advance my fortune by marrying, and then to reconcile myself to God by doing my duty for the remainder of my life.

Lady. Nothing can be more common than for people thus fatally to deceive themselves. They intend to act well at some *future time*, but have always an excuse for indulging *at present* in doing something that seems more pleasant, or more profitable, than their duty. But when this future time comes, it brings new temptations with it; and thus they proceed, step by step, till sin becomes habitual. Finding it more and more difficult to reform, sickness or old age comes on before their useless intentions of amendment are put into practice; and their last hours are filled with remorse and anguish, instead of being cheered by the recollection of a well-spent life, and the glorious hopes of a blessed eternity. Go on, however, with your story, and at all events be thankful that you were prevented from marrying a bad man.

Sarah. I told you, madam, that Andrew sometimes came to me in an evening; and on one of these occasions my mistress coming unexpectedly into the kitchen, he hid himself behind a door; but she had heard or seen something of him, and asked if I had not somebody with me. I answered that I was sitting quite alone. "I hope, Sarah," said she, "you would not tell me a deliberate falsehood. Take time to think; and remember that God hears you." Though I felt these solemn words at the bottom of my heart, yet I again assured her that no one had been with me; when, to my utter confusion, she went to the very spot where he stood, and appearing both shocked and grieved, after a moment's silence bade him instantly leave the house; which he did, without speaking a word.

When my mistress turned her eyes upon me, I thought I should have sunk into the earth, and trembled from head to foot. Perceiving my condition, she sat down, and with her usual goodness bade me do the same. O madam, if I could tell you all that she then said to me, and you could hear the kind yet solemn

manner in which she spoke, I know it would reach your heart, as it did mine at that moment. I own with shame, that it had not the effect which it ought to have had upon my conduct; but to my dying day shall I remember the awful warning that she gave me, to take heed unto my ways; to assure myself that no lying hypocrite, no artful deceiver, will inherit the kingdom of heaven; and that, even, if I looked only to this world, such conduct as mine was likely to prove my ruin; as no man who intended honourably would persuade me to act in a manner so disgraceful to my character.

I wept bitterly and promised to do whatever she advised in future, if she would allow me to remain in my place. She told me that she would take the night to consider of it, and give me an answer in the morning. Never shall I forget the prayer of that evening; I am sure my dear mistress thought of me, when she so fervently besought God to fill our hearts with the *spirit and love of truth*.

I hardly closed my eyes all night. Sometimes I felt fully resolved to give myself entirely to God and goodness, by openly and honestly confessing my faults to him and to my mistress, and from that hour giving up all bad connections. Then the thoughts of Andrew, who, though I continually saw him doing wrong, and tempting me to do the same, I foolishly fancied had a good heart, would come into my mind; and it seemed very hard to give up such a fine prospect of happiness and prosperity as I should have in marrying him. But then again I thought, if I was to gain all that this world could give, it would last only for a few years; while, by devoting myself entirely to my duty, and leaving all that might happen in this life to the will of God, I should secure everlasting happiness in heaven. O madam! I knew that this was *far better*; and when I got up in the morning, I thought I had fully resolved so to do: but upon opening the street-door, the first person I saw was

Andrew; and he said so many kind things, and showed such grief when I told him what I intended, that I could not help weeping. He then said, that if I would leave my place, and go with him to our wakes, which was the next week, the banns for our marriage should be immediately put up, and I could stay with my mother till his month was out at the Eagles, when, without more delay, he would marry me: but if I cruelly refused to do this, he would not stay at home to die of grief, but that very day enlist for a soldier, and go into the hottest battle, that death might cure him of his misery. This overcame all my good resolutions; I could resist no longer; but promising, as usual, to conceal every thing from my mistress, I agreed to do as he desired.

Lady. Ah, Sarah, you ought to have known, that where there is concealment there must be something wrong. "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved: But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

Sarah. I soon found that to be true: found it to my heavy cost, as you shall now hear. My good mistress, soon after breakfast, calling me to her, asked me whether I was prepared to make a full confession of my faults, and to give up all connection with those persons who had led me into them. I was silent, for I could not return the answer that I ought to have done; and she immediately after, paying me my full wages, told me that I must leave her house that very day.

I was cut to the heart; but unless I had again altered my designs, what could I say? I did nothing but weep; and when I had packed up my clothes, and went to the parlour-door to take my leave, I was unable to speak. The dear lady never gave me a reproachful word, but again earnestly bade me beware of those who encouraged me to be a hypocrite and a

deceiver, and had already separated me from a true friend. I left her with a heavy heart, and went straight to a house where I used sometimes to meet Andrew and Jenny : there I staid a few nights, passing a part of every day at the Eagles, and trying, by mirth and diversion, to drive away thought. The following week we went to the wakes : but, O madam, I cannot tell you the hateful particulars of what happened there. I found that the wicked Andrew had never intended to marry me, but that he and Jenny, whom he had before deluded, had joined in a scheme for my destruction. Through the mercy of God, and the excellent advice of my good mistress, which had put me on my guard, I escaped from their net ; they were not able to make me the wicked wretch they intended. But though I escaped from guilt, I could not from disgrace ; they told a thousand lies of me, which utterly ruined my character, and prevented my having a chance of getting into a decent place : so I remained several months with my poor mother, in a half distracted state. She was unable even to maintain herself, and of course had nothing to spare for me ; and as I had always been too fond of dress to have much money beforehand, I had nearly spent my last shilling, when David Williams made me an offer of marriage ; and I became his wife, chiefly because I saw no better means of procuring bread.

It is now nine years since all this happened, and so long have I been living here in labour and sorrow. I have seven children, who would be sensible and good ; but I have forgotten all that my dear mistress taught me, and their father never knew a letter in his life : so, as we are very short of money, I have not even the means of having them taught to read ; and the poor things are growing up rude and ignorant, with little chance of making better men and women than their father and mother now are.

Lady. I am much affected with the little history that you have given me. How fully does it prove

the danger of allowing ourselves to practise what we call small faults ! and among these, I know none so greatly to be dreaded as every kind of falsehood and deceit. Our heavenly Father is *truth*. Jesus, his beloved son, came into the world to bear witness to the *truth*. Remember, then, that when you depart from truth, you renounce God as your Father, and Christ as your Saviour. If you would tremble to do this, beware of every approach towards a lie.

Had you been directed by your excellent mistress, how good and happy might you now have been ! either living in ease and comfort in her service, and assisting in her works of charity, or as the prudent and industrious wife of some worthy man ; for no discreet and modest young woman can fail to have the offer of such a one, if she performs well the duties of her single station, and resolutely avoids the company of idle and dissolute people. These opportunities of doing well are unhappily over with you ; but still much may be done to better your condition, and I will gladly give you my best advice and help towards it.

Sarah. Thank you, thank you, madam. Your kindness makes me weep ; it is so like that of my dear mistress.

Lady. In the first place, my good Sarah, be truly grateful to God, for having preserved you from the sinful state into which your false friend, and pretended lover, hoped to plunge you. Never can you be thankful enough for such a deliverance from vice in this world, and punishment in the next. You have the comfort of knowing that the shameful things they have reported of you are *false* : and if others give credit to them, you must patiently bear the disgrace, as a misfortune which you brought upon yourself by keeping bad company.

Sarah. It is to God, and the advice and warnings of my good mistress, that I owe my escape from vice, and I will strive to be more grateful for it than I have been.

Lady. To love the "giver of all good gifts," is the prime duty of our lives. And in order to fulfil this "*first and great commandment*," we must from day to day meditate upon the unmerited blessings which he has already bestowed upon us, and still more upon those infinitely greater and more precious, which are hereafter to be the portion, and "exceeding great reward," of all his faithful servants.—Without continually thinking of God, and striving every hour to do his will, it is a vain pretence to say that we love him.

Sarah. O madam, I can love and thank him with my heart; but how can such a poor ignorant creature as I pretend to serve him? I have no power or means to do good

Lady. I will tell you how. By being content with your hard condition, and striving cheerfully to perform the duties of it. By being a kind and faithful wife, bearing with the faults, and cherishing the good qualities, of your husband. By carefully attending to your children, and teaching them to be pious, honest, and good tempered. By being diligent in your business, frugal and clean in your house, and by doing all the good you can to every one within your reach, whether he is rich or poor.

All these great and material duties may be done by a poor and ignorant woman; and if she does them to the utmost of her power, she will secure to herself increasing comfort in this world, and a glorious prospect of never ending happiness in that which is to come.

Sarah. Dear madam, how you encourage me! I never thought a poor person had the power to do any good: but now I see it does not all depend upon riches. Indeed you have done more for me this morning than if you had given me many pounds.

Lady. Will you then act up to the advice that I have been giving you? Will you hearken to our heavenly Teacher, and diligently "strive to enter in at the strait gate?"

Sarah. To the utmost of my power I will. But you must teach and direct me in the great work which I am undertaking.

Lady. Most gladly will I give you every help that is in my power; and may our heavenly Father give his blessing, to crown and prosper our endeavours! You must begin with being perfectly reconciled to your neighbour, and doing all in your power to make her love you and your children.

Sarah. Ah, madam! she is very proud, and passionate, and has no pity or kindness in her. She will not even sell me a drop of milk; and gives to her pigs what I and my poor children would be thankful for.

Lady. This may be because you have not tried to please and oblige her. There is never much quarrelling among neighbours, without some faults on both sides.

Sarah. Why, I must own, when we first came here, we thought it hard that they should have the orchard and garden that used to belong to this house, while we had only a piece of waste ground, which cost us a great deal of expense and labour before it brought back any thing; and what is still worse, an excellent pump, which was for the use of both families, is now railed into their fold, and I or my children are obliged to go almost half a mile for every drop of water that we use. These things, and their proud behaviour, made us very angry, and I will own that we were provoked to do many spiteful things by them. Indeed my husband often said we should do but right to make them weary of their lives, and so drive them from the place. But Mrs. Bennet, who was the Squire's nurse, complained to him, and we had notice to quit; which we must have done, if I had not gone myself and faithfully promised that he should give them no more cause of offence.

Lady. I hope you are fully sensible that both yourself and your husband have in this been much to

blame ; and as the first proof of sincere repentance, you must, from your heart, forgive them all the injuries they have done or intended to do you ; and in future, instead of abusing and quarrelling with them, you must take pains to speak in the most civil and good-tempered manner whenever you meet ; and watch for opportunities of doing any of those little kindnesses which ought to pass between persons who live near to each other. Be very careful, too, to keep your children from being noisy and troublesome to them : you cannot conceive the pain that elderly or sickly people endure, when exposed to the disturbance of rude children.

Sarah. I believe you say truly, madam ; and I am ashamed to own, that I have often pleased myself with thinking how Mrs. Bennet has been teased with mine.

Lady. To take pleasure in the unhappiness of any fellow-creature, shows a most unchristian spirit. Remember, dear Sarah, who it is that says, " Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for those who despitefully use and persecute you." By following this noble precept (and without following it you can be no disciple of Christ) you will gain much good-will, and perhaps turn enemies into friends. But should any hold out, and return evil for your constant good-will and kindness, be not discouraged ; but still go on doing them all the good in your power ; so shall you and your babes be the children of Him who is patient and long-suffering even to the ungodly, and has promised to " forgive our trespasses, if we forgive those who trespass against us."

Sarah. I see, dear madam, that your counsel is good ; I will lay it up in my heart, and strive to follow it. I will behave respectfully to Mrs. Bennet, and teach my children to do the same ; nor shall they ever again take an apple from her trees, or bring in a single egg that I am not certain is my own.

Lady. And did you indeed suffer them to do such things? Did you not reflect, that no one becomes desperately wicked at once; but that all those miserable creatures who are transported into slavery, or lose their lives upon the gallows, were once innocent children, who might have been trained for heaven; and that there can be no doubt that many of them were first corrupted, by their parents encouraging them, while young, in what are called small crimes?

Sarah. O madam, you make me tremble. I now see that I have been very wicked; and had I gone on, dreadful might have been the consequence to these poor infants. You have opened my eyes to all the guilt and ruin that I was bringing upon them, and with the help of God I will this very day begin a different course. If an apple or a plum falls over the hedge, it shall be carefully picked up, and given to the right owner; and not an egg shall be brought into my house, that I am not sure was laid by my own fowls. I will resolve rather to lose ten, than take one that belongs to another person. God forbid that I should train up my children to be thieves!

Lady. Honesty, strict honesty, and a love of truth, should be firmly fixed in the minds of children. But as a foundation for all that is right and good, teach them early to know and love their Maker.

Sarah. Ah, madam, how can one so ignorant as I am be able to do that? If I could read the Bible, I would make it a part of my daily business to learn from it both their duty and my own. But, alas! that precious book is shut up from me. The Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer, my dear mistress taught me to repeat, and I have not forgotten them; but more than these I am unable to teach my children.

Lady. It is a real misfortune not to know how to read. But notwithstanding this, you are acquainted with much that will instruct and improve your little ones. You can tell them that there is a very great

and good God, who made the world and every thing that is in it; who gave them life, who sees them every moment, hears every word that they speak, and knows the very thoughts of their hearts; and that this great Being will certainly reward or punish them according as their thoughts, words, and actions have been good or evil.

Can any one who knows these great and important truths say that she is too ignorant to instruct her children? But you can go still further. When what I have already mentioned has been firmly fixed in their hearts and memories, which it will be if you take all proper opportunities of impressing it upon them, you will go on to tell them, that God sent Jesus Christ into the world, to teach us what we must do to be saved; that he was put to death by wicked men, but raised from the grave by his heavenly Father; and after remaining forty days upon earth, more fully to instruct and strengthen his true disciples, he was gloriously taken up into heaven; from whence he will come to raise the dead, and call them to a solemn and awful account for all their deeds; "for God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world, by that man whom he hath ordained."

You know all these things; and if you diligently strive to teach them to your children, always speaking on these subjects with kindness, and in a spirit of love, doubt not but God will give a blessing to and prosper your pious endeavours.

Sarah. O madam, you have opened a new world to my view, and I trust I shall live as a new creature in it. I see that I may, through the great mercy of God, save my own soul, and greatly help my children, even though I am unable to read. Should I not teach them to pray?

Lady. By all means. A child should be early taught a few words easily to be understood, in which to address its Maker.

The widow then took out her pocket-book, and

with a pencil, wrote the following prayer for a child from three to five years old :

“ O most great and glorious God, hearken, I beseech thee, to my humble prayer ; bless and keep all my friends, and make me love and obey thee better and better every day that I live.”

This prayer she read over and over, till Sarah could repeat it perfectly ; advising her to teach it first to the eldest, and then to all the rest ; never omitting to kneel down in the midst of them herself every evening, to say the Lord's Prayer ; always concluding with words like these :—“ May God bless you all, my dear children, and grant that you may grow up good men and women ?”

Sarah. I can never be thankful enough to you, madam, for coming thus like an angel from heaven, to save me and my poor little ones.

Lady. Let all your thanks, my good Sarah, be paid to God. I am only endeavouring to obey him, when I seek to be useful to you ; therefore to Him alone be all the praise. My life has of late been a sorrowful one. I have for many weeks been selfish, and thought of nothing but my own griefs : but our merciful Father is now teaching me, that it is my duty and my happiness not to live unto myself, but, pressing forward in the blessed path marked out by my Saviour, seek not to do my own wayward will, “ but the will of him who sent me.”

Your virtuous resolutions gladden my heart, and you shall have all the assistance in my power to give, towards putting them into steady and regular practice. What kind of man is your husband ? I fear, not altogether such as you could wish.

Sarah. Ah, madam ! he goes too much to the public-house upon the green, to be a good husband to me, or good father to his children. But I have been too faulty myself, to leave me any right to complain of him : but when he sees that I am grown

better, and the children better, who knows but he may mend also?

Lady. It is very likely that he will ; for there is great power in a good example, especially if you always treat him with good temper and kindness, and strive to make his house comfortable to him. It is, however, very difficult to get the better of bad habits, and you must have much patience and forbearance : but if you are able to go on, and steadily act this virtuous part, a truly christian wife can hardly fail in the end to convert her husband.

Sarah. God has long been patient with my many sins and faults, and I will bear patiently with my husband till He is pleased to give a blessing to my endeavours to turn his heart.

Lady. You are no doubt desirous that your children should lose no time in learning to read, and I will pay for the two eldest at the village school.

Sarah. Ah, madam ! I thank you a thousand times for this great kindness ; my little James has long been wishing to go, and I pray that a blessing may go with him ; for the first day in which he reads a chapter in the Bible will be the happiest of his mother's life. Every night, dear madam, will I pray for you upon my bended knees.

Lady. I gladly accept your prayers, dear Sarah ; but all your thanks are due to Him who alone can prosper my endeavours.

I have one thing more to speak of, and must then leave you for the present. How do you spend your Sundays ?

Sarah. Little better than the rest of the week.— With my poor husband, indeed, it is generally worse, for he often passes most part of the day at the public-house ; and as for me and my children, we put on clean clothes, indeed, and we do no work, but we hardly know what the inside of a place of worship is. I have always a young child, or two, to attend to ; and the rest are unwilling to go without me : so it is

a day in which nothing goes forward, either for this world or the next.

Lady. A melancholy account indeed ! I hardly thought any decent families had spent such Sundays in this Christian country. How different would it be, if your husband was a sober and religious man ! He might then take the elder children on Sunday mornings to whatever place of worship you approve, and you might do the same in the afternoon, while he remained at home. Thus both would have the opportunity of joining their Christian neighbours in prayer and thanksgiving, once in every week, and your children would be instructed in their duty, and trained up in those good habits which will ensure their comfort in this world, and lead to salvation in the next. How delightful would it be, after the evening service, to sit down to your tea or coffee with your little family about you, your husband and yourself recollecting the texts and subjects of the sermons and chapters which you had that day heard, and questioning the children, to find whether they had understood any part of them, and, as far as you were able, to explain and make it useful to them !

Sarah. Ah, madam ! such a Sunday would seem a little heaven upon earth to me. But I can join in no prayers, nor hear a single sermon the whole year round, nor have I any means of sending the children. Yet, now I think of it, I might get my poor old mother to come now and then in an evening, and take care of the young ones, while I go with the three eldest. I am sure she would do this at any time. So I will go this very day, and ask her for next Sunday.

Lady. I approve very highly of this plan, and have no doubt but you will reap much benefit and comfort from it. And thus it will always be : when we are truly desirous of learning our duty, God never fails to furnish us with the means. Let me, however, remind you, my dear Sarah, that it is of little use to attend a place of public worship, without

first preparing our minds for this solemn duty, by freeing them, as far as possible, not only from the vices and bad passions, but from the follies, vanities, and troubles, of the present world. Steadily endeavour to do this ; and when the service begins, let your heart go with every word that you hear or utter ; always remembering, that when you pray, you are speaking to that *Almighty Being* in whose hand is the life of every creature. When the Scriptures are read, or the sermon delivered, attend to them as closely as you are able, that you may from time to time gain a precious hoard of that knowledge which will make you "wise unto salvation." As you return home, think of all that you have heard ; and when there, show, by the gentleness and humility of your conduct and manners, that a religious impression remains upon your mind. Thus will your attendance on the public worship of God become truly beneficial to yourself, and to your family ; nay, more, your good example may induce others to walk in the same path, and you may be the happy means of leading many to righteousness.

Saying this, the worthy widow departed, with a heart overflowing with gratitude to God for the good success which appeared likely, a second time, to attend her charitable endeavours to raise a family of his children from a state of ignorance and vice, to be the disciples and followers of his beloved Son ; and through faith in the gracious promises of the Gospel, and obedience to its holy precepts, the future inheritors of a glorious heavenly kingdom.

VILLAGE DIALOGUES.

PART III.

THEY who have read the first part of the Village Dialogues, will perhaps wish to be informed, whether the good widow succeeded in her hope of reforming the hearts and lives of those of her poor neighbours, with whom she first conversed ; or whether, as I fear is sometimes the case, after appearing sensible of their faults, and resolved to make a thorough change, they were again drawn aside by the power of evil habits, or the temptations of a world in which there are too many who chiefly, if not entirely, confine their attention to the things of the present day, while they neglect the far weightier concerns of a state towards which every rising morn, and every closing eve, carries us swiftly forward ?

Before I proceed to satisfy thy curiosity with respect to these villagers, let me ask thee, my reader, or rather let me earnestly entreat thee to *ask thyself*, whether this is thy own case ? Look into thine heart and conduct, and answer this momentous question—"Is the life thou art now leading, such as will prepare thee for the pure enjoyments of heaven ? or art thou trifling away thy time and talents in thoughtlessness, worldly mindedness, or what is still worse, in indulging any of those sinful habits which degrade thy nature, and sink thee below the level of the brutes that perish !" Reply truly and seriously to this solemn inquiry ; and think, while time and opportunity for repentance and amendment still remain, that life and death are set before thee, and upon the regulation of thine own heart and conduct, thy fate depends : for "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, *consider your ways ; seek good and not evil, that ye*

may live; and the^d Lord, the God of hosts, shall be with you."

The day after that in which the late sorrowful, but now reviving widow had visited the gardener's cottage, Thomas's wife came, according to her direction, to fetch some broth for her husband, when the following short dialogue passed between them.

Lady. How is your husband, my good woman?

Jane. Why indeed, madam, I hardly know what answer to make you; he seems better, and he says he is better, and yet I think he is for death.

Lady. And why do you think so? tell me, and I may perhaps be able to remove your fears.

Jane. Why, Madam, you know he is naturally cross and passionate, and since his illness I have had enough to do to please, or indeed to live with him at any rate; and as for the children, I have been forced to keep them most part of the day out of doors, for he would not bear the least noise; but yesterday, when I went up stairs with the dinner that you sent him, he spoke to me in such a manner as I have heard nothing like it for many a year. He asked me to sit down and partake with him; and when I refused, and said I hoped it would do him good, he took hold of my hand so kindly, and said, "Dear Jane, I hope never again to have any good thing without you and my children sharing it with me." I looked at him with such surprise that I could not speak; and more when I saw tears come into his eyes. "What is the matter with you, Thomas," said I, "I am afraid you are growing worse, do try to eat something; and to please him I helped myself to a little, and he went on talking in the same kind way, so that I wondered what could be the matter. After dinner he seemed weak, and I asked him to lie down upon the bed, and brought my own large handkerchief to lay over his head; as I put it on, he again took hold of my hand, and pressing it between both his, said, "dear Jane," in such a way,

that it went quite to my heart. Well, Madam, I went down stairs wondering at all this, and took particular care to keep the house quiet, for I thought to myself, perhaps poor Thomas may not have many times more to sleep in this world. About five in the evening he knocked with a stick upon the floor, and I went up to him; he was sitting upon the bed, and in the same kind and gentle voice, told me that he had been asleep, and should now be glad of a dish of coffee; adding, "let the children come up and have some with us; I will not be so cross with them again as I used to be." This surprised me more than all, for he was always grumbling and complaining about them, and wishing they were old enough to be sent out to work. I went down however, and called them into the house, and as he often found fault with them for being dirty, I washed their hands and faces, and as soon as I had boiled the coffee, took them up to him. He kissed them all, and put the youngest to sit upon the bed by him, and afterwards gave each a biscuit out of the paper which you sent him, and some coffee out of his own cup. Unluckily, little Tommy, while I was looking another way, threw down a plate, which broke into twenty pieces; but when I was going to beat him, my husband caught hold of my arm, and said; "do not strike him, he intended no harm, and we will forgive him if he promises to be more careful for the future." Well, I wondered more than ever, for he used to be the first to punish the poor things, but as I did not then like to vex him, I let the boy go, though I know it was wrong to do so.

Lady. I do not think so. If your child had broken the plate on purpose, you ought to have corrected him; but as it was an accident, and might have happened to yourself, what his father did was quite right; and I would advise you as much as possible to avoid beating your children, it only hardens, and makes them passionate and ill tempered.

Jane. But what else can I do, Madam? I cannot let them be their own masters, and I do not like to keep them from their meals, for they have little enough to eat at all times.

Lady. You are right never to deprive them of their food. But there are many ways of punishing, without beating or starving them; and much less correction would be necessary, if parents were careful not to be passionate and ill-tempered themselves; for whether it be good or bad, children will imitate what they continually see.

Jane. Then ours have a poor chance, for both Thomas and I are very passionate. But as I was telling you, Madam, he was last night so mild and good humoured, that he hardly seemed the same person; and after I went to bed I could not sleep for thinking of it, till it came into my mind that this was a change before death. And to be sure it must be so, for what else could thus all on a sudden make him quite like another man.

Lady. I will tell you my good Jane.—God has touched his heart. He sees the folly and wickedness of his past life, and is resolved to become “a new creature.” This is no sign of approaching death; for when life is near its close, even if our senses continue perfect, we can hardly hope to have sufficient strength or ability of any kind, to enable us to bring about a material change in ourselves. The sinner on his death bed can seldom do more than confess and lament over the guilt of his past life; and should your husband now leave the world, we could not be certain that his contrition is sincere.—But I trust that God will mercifully prolong his time of trial; that he may do “works worthy of repentance,” and by degrees be fitted for the great change which death will make in our condition.

Jane. I wish it may be so, but I fear when he recovers his health and gets amongst his old companions, he will forget all this goodness, which has come so suddenly over him, and become just as bad as ever.

Lady. There is great and serious danger of that. But you may do much towards preventing it, by a careful attention to your own conduct. Try to oblige and please him in every thing, and teach your children to do the same; this will encourage him to give up his old companions and bad habits; and you may yet live many happy years together, after all your disagreements.

Jane shook her head and made no answer, and the widow, thinking she had said enough at this time, gave her some broth, and a small white loaf for her husband, and bidding her good day, the woman departed.

The account which she had just received of Thomas's altered conduct, was highly gratifying to the benevolent widow, and after lifting up her heart in thankfulness to Him "whose favour is better than life," and to whose approbation she looked as the sweet reward of her virtuous exertions, she sat down to consider how she could most profitably employ the remainder of the day.

Her thoughts immediately turned to the gardener's family: she felt much compassionate kindness for poor Sarah, and resolved to use her utmost endeavours to reconcile her to her neighbour, and if possible make them a mutual comfort and advantage to each other. She had heard that Mrs. Bennet did various kinds of needle work for hire, and resolving, as an introduction, to employ her in some trifle, sent her servant to request that she would come to her that afternoon for particular directions. She came accordingly, and after the business was settled, the lady, in her usual kind and obliging manner, desired her to stay and take an early dish of tea with her, and after some chat upon indifferent subjects, for she did not wish her to suspect the real purpose of the visit; "your house" said she, "stands upon a pretty pleasant spot, and you seem to have an excellent garden and orchard."

Mrs. Bennet. Yes, Madam, our house, for a small place, is very comfortable, and we have plenty of fruit and gardenstuff for our own use, and a little to sell. Indeed, I should upon the whole think myself well off, but for our next door neighbours, who are such low, noisy, dishonest people, that there is no living peaceably by them. I was quite shocked and ashamed that you should the other day find me demeaning myself so much as to quarrel with that woman.

Lady. I was sorry too, because I think that by kindness and good nature you might gain an influence over her, which would be a comfort to you, and a great advantage to her.

Mrs. Bennet. If they had been people of good character, I certainly should have noticed them, and perhaps they might in some things have been useful to me; but David Williams is an abusive drunken fellow, and it is well known that Sally Dean, who, though she is now so poor a slattern, was then a smart clever girl, would never have married him if she had not so lost her character with a profligate man who was waiter at the Eagles, that she had no chance of getting into a creditable service.

Lady. She was indeed very much to blame in that affair; but I believe many lies were told to blacken and ruin her character by the wicked man himself, when he could not succeed in his designs upon her.

Mrs. Bennet. That may be, but it is well known that she left her place at a day's warning, and such a mistress as she had would not have used her so without good reason.

Lady. It is true, she admitted the man you mentioned secretly into the house, and when this was found out, told a direct lie, and persisted in it; which, with her refusing to give up all connexion with him, fully justified her mistress for acting as she did. But for this ill-conduct she has suffered long and heavily, and she now appears truly sensible of, and sorry for her faults.

Mrs. Bennet. It is easy to guess from whom you had this account. But as she owned herself a *liar*, I wonder that you, Madam, would hearken to any thing that she could say.

Lady. I perceive the force and truth of your remark. The miserable state of the liar is such, that he cannot expect to be believed, even when he speaks the truth. But there is a great appearance of penitence and sincerity about this woman, and it is our duty to assist and encourage a return to virtue in every fellow-creature.

Mrs. Bennet. Ah, Madam, you do not know Sarah Williams as I do. She is a low dishonest woman. I resolved from the first of their coming to the house that I would have nothing to do with them, and all that I have since seen and heard, confirms my resolution.

Lady. In what respects have you found her dishonest?

Mrs. Bennet. In the worst of all ways, for she employs her children to rob me. If I was to tell you all the losses that I have had in my garden and orchard, and in my poultry, through them, you would hardly believe it.

Lady. But are you sure that their mother knew when they did these things? poor untaught children are too apt of themselves to be mischievous.

Mrs. Bennet. I cannot say that I have heard her bid them rob me, or that she went with them to do it; but I have no doubt of many of my apples having been put into her pies, and many of my eggs into her basket to be carried to market.

Lady. These are very wrong, and very provoking things, but much more hurtful to her and to her children than they can be to you. Did you ever talk to her of the great crime which she was committing, in thus training them up to vice from their very cradles?

Mrs. Bennet. I do not know that I have ever talk-

ed to her in that way, but I have often threatened to take her and them before the Squire. Indeed, I know that I have been too meek with them, as I told her yesterday, in not having done so already ; but she may depend upon it I will take the very next opportunity. The fittest place for such people is the House of Correction.

Lady. You do not see their conduct in the light in which a true christian would wish to look upon it. This poor woman cannot even read, and it is nine years since she left the excellent mistress who taught her all that she knows of right and wrong, and was the means of saving her from falling still much lower than her present sad condition. She married too, it appears, a man more likely to corrupt her principles than amend them, and who has kept her in a state of poverty which subjects her to many temptations, that can hardly be imagined by those who have always lived in plenty. When you consider all this, surely you will feel more pity than anger, and rather try to convince and cure her of her faults, than seek to punish her for them.

Mrs. Bennet. Indeed, Madam, I desire to have nothing at all to do with them. If I can do my duty, and pay every one their own, it is all that I pretend to, and I wish every one would do as much.

Lady. It is certainly right in the first place to see our own conduct, and to do full justice by every one with whom we deal. But when this is done, another and a very material part of our duty, is to be kind and friendly to our fellow-creatures, and particularly to use our best endeavours to instruct the ignorant, and reform the vicious.

Mrs. Bennet. To be sure, Madam, all this is quite right in you, and other ladies, who have knowledge, and time, and fortunes ; but from one like me, who works for her living, nothing of the kind can be expected.

Lady. Think of the poverty and hardships which

this poor woman daily endures, without a single friend to assist, or even advise her ; and then think what a support and consolation such a neighbour as yourself might be to her.

Mrs. Bennet. Indeed, Madam, I have never been used to keep company with such as she. I have endeavoured to behave so as to be noticed by my betters : and I think the only way to live with peace and credit in this world, is to mind one's own affairs, and have nothing to do with those of other people ; and indeed, Madam, I wonder why you should wish me to have any concerns with such a low beggarly family as that of David Williams.

Lady. For the best reason in the world, because I know that you might do them good. Suppose these poor people were related to you, suppose Sarah was the daughter of your brother or sister, and had fallen into poverty and wretchedness, would you not then feel it your duty to help her ?

Mrs. Bennet. To be sure I should : for then she would have a natural claim upon me. I have more than once befriended my relations, and if she was my niece, I could help her in many ways without missing it myself, and it would be my duty so to do.

Lady. And are we not all of one family, the children of one merciful Father, and heirs together of one glorious inheritance ? Did not Jesus, " the first-born of many brethren," he, whose spirit we should labour to imbibe, and whose conduct should be the object of our constant imitation ; did not he select his apostles from among the poor, and preach the glad tidings of the gospel more especially to the poor ? And shall we venture to call ourselves his disciples, while we despise those to whom he directed his chief attention and regards ? Shall we be so blind, so low minded, as to think any child of immortality, any heir of the heavenly kingdom, beneath our friendly care and attention ? Should we not rather bow down in thankfulness to Him who hath placed our condi-

tion above want, and bestowed upon us the high privilege of being his ministers for good, to our suffering brethren? Let us think justly, my dear Mrs. Bennet, of these things, and "not be high-minded, but condescend to men of low estate."

Mrs. Bennet. To be sure, Madam, our religion teaches this.

Lady. And why do we not *act* upon it? It is useless to know the will of God without striving to perform it. Such servants, our Lord assures us, will be "beaten with many stripes." The precepts of religion should be so written on our hearts, as to be always uppermost in our thoughts, and the guide of all our actions. This would make us kind and generous; we should think less of mere selfish gratifications, and more of promoting the welfare and comfort of others. If we would be "as the holy and beloved of God," we must "put on kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another."

Mrs. Bennet made no answer, and appeared so little affected by what she had heard, that the worthy widow could hope for no good effect from saying more at this time. There is no *forcing* people to think, any more than to act right, and after conversing a short time upon indifferent subjects they parted.

There are few things so likely to harden the heart as pride; and few faults so difficult to cure, as a foolish opinion of our own merits. "The publicans and the harlots," says Jesus to the hypocritical and self-righteous Pharisees, "go into the kingdom of heaven before you!" The grossest sinners are more likely to become penitent and reform, than those who are so wilfully blind as to justify, and even applaud themselves for their unrighteousness. The absence of good, will as certainly exclude us from heaven, as the commission of evil; though it will not call down an equal degree of punishment. Many per-

sons, because they have been prudent, and therefore successful in their worldly concerns, and have been guilty of none of those vices which the world marks as disgraceful, are fully satisfied with themselves, and persuaded that no more is required from them. This was the case with Mrs. Bennet ; she had been an honest and useful servant, lived many years in the same place, saved a good sum of money, and married a sober and industrious man. After her marriage she continued equally notable, and living in frugal comfort, added every year considerably to her store. All this was well and commendable, but no more than mere *worldly* wisdom would have taught her ; it would have been folly to act otherwise, if there was no life beyond the grave. But an humble candidate for heaven, would have looked beyond herself, and instead of avoiding her poor and ignorant neighbour, have tried to lighten her burdens by friendly assistance. She would sometimes have read to her from the sacred volume, and have taken her children to the house of prayer. " Stay with your infants," she would have said to the thankful mother, " God has committed them to your tenderest care, and you can think of him, and pray to him in your heart, while you are watching over them. If their clothes are whole and clean, it is all that I desire, for the rich and poor meet as equals to worship their heavenly Father, and he regardeth not their rank or their possessions." " The Lord seeth not as man seeth, for God looketh on the heart !"

How pleasing would it have been, to see Mrs. Bennet thus conducting the children of her neighbour to a place where they might be taught to lift their young hearts to Him who made them, and have learned their duty to him, to their parents, and to all mankind. Would she not have appeared in the eyes of all beholders, far more respectable than the company of the finest lady in the parish could have made her ? for bad as the world is, and little as the generality of

people are disposed to practise it, genuine active goodness never appears without being commended and admired.

Mrs. Bennet, however, had such mistaken notions, that she would have been ashamed to take these little creatures in their coarse coats and frocks as her companions to the house of prayer; nor did she think it her duty to assist their poor mother either to feed, clothe, or instruct them. Her maxim was, "Let every one take care of his own." But is this a christian maxim? Does it teach us to live according to the precepts of our master? No, no;—the religion of Christ gives no colour, affords no cloak for selfishness: its essence is *love*; love of God, shewing itself in acts of kindness to our fellow-creatures. And this love, this christian charity, must not be confined to our families, to our friends, or even to those whom we judge worthy; "For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those who love them. And if ye do good to them who do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners do even the same. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind to the unthankful, and to the evil." "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."

The widow was disappointed, but not discouraged by her late ill success. She saw that Mrs. Bennet possessed one virtue which many good-hearted people suffer greatly from the want of, and that is *prudence*. This had made her a good servant, and a good wife, and put her into a respectable situation in life. Surely, thought she, I shall by degrees be able to open her heart; and make her feel, that to confer benefits is a happiness as well as a duty; and that the understanding of that person must be strangely darkened and perverted, who thinks himself above serving and assisting the present wants and neces-

sities of those highly favored beings, within whose reach is placed a crown of unfading glory. Can one to whom these "great and precious promises" are made, be looked down upon with contempt by him who hopes to partake of them?

How trifling in reality is the difference between the prince and the peasant, when we know, that in a few short years both will be laid in the silent grave, from whence they will rise as *equals*; each to be rewarded or punished according as his deeds have merited? Attend to this, ye great ones of the earth, and let it teach you "not to think of yourselves above what ye ought to think;" "not to be high-minded, but fear." And let the poor and lowly reflect upon the great gifts which God has bestowed upon *all* his children, and looking carefully to their ways, so endure the trials and temptations which he suffers to befall them in this life, that when the great day of retribution comes, they may be found in the happy number of those who "came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb:" that is, who have purified themselves from sin, by obeying the holy precepts, and following the bright example of "him who loved, and gave himself for us."

The wife of Thomas came every day as she had been directed, to fetch something nourishing for her husband, and gave favourable accounts of his recovering health and amended disposition; but one morning, just as the widow had finished her breakfast, the eldest child came to say that his father seemed to be very ill again, and begged her to come to him immediately. She readily complied with this request, and going back with the boy, found the poor man looking better in health, but appearing sorrowful and dejected. He respectfully placed a chair for her, and having sent the child out to play, spoke as follows.

Thomas. Ah, Madam! all is over with me: I un-

dertook what I have not the power to perform. The strength of bad habits is more than I can get the better of, and I must give it up. Very wicked I shall not again be, but I have lost all hope of being good.

Lady. How is this, my friend? what can I have happened so far to discourage, as to tempt you to forsake a road, which, though it may sometimes be difficult, you know leads up to heaven.

Thomas. My want of power to climb so high. If I had begun in early life, it would have been like setting out from level ground, with my full strength to assist me: but after living many years, as I have done, it is the same thing as labouring up the steep side of a miry pit, and every bad practice of my former life is like a weight of lead hung round my neck, which, when I attempt to rise, drags me down to the same wretched place where I was before. Alas, Madam! after all my hopes, resolutions, and promises, you see me now the same guilty creature that you first found me.

Lady. No, no; I see another man. I see one who hates his sins, and is sincerely sorry that he ever committed them. One who is, I trust, upon the very eve of reformation.

Thomas. You will not say so when I have told you all. You always thought, and still think too well of me. One so good as you can form no notion of what wicked people and wicked habits are. I do indeed repent from the bottom of my soul, of all my unrighteous deeds, but I shall never reform, never get the better of my passions; I see and feel that but too plainly.

Lady. Tell me what it is that has thus discouraged you, and I shall know better what advice to give.

Thomas. Well, Madam, I will do so: indeed I wished to see you for that very purpose: but though I lament, and am ready to confess my faults, without I could get the better of them, I know the rest is nothing.

Lady. That is true, but sorrow and confession are the first steps towards amendment.

Thomas. It may be so, Madam, but I am a sad proof that it does not always follow after them. When I had well considered all your excellent advice and instruction, I felt that it was good, and as I believed, was fully determined to give up every sin, and become in the true sense of our Lord's words, "a new creature;" and after I had made this resolution, I was happier than I had ever been before. I seemed to feel that God would forgive me all that was past, and I continually prayed him to direct and strengthen me in the time to come. I tried to behave kindly to my wife and children, and when I suffered from pain and sickness, to bear it patiently, and even to be thankful for all that my heavenly Father thought fit to send. Day after day passed thus happily; I gained bodily strength fast, and I hoped all difficulties of another kind were over; but, alas! yesterday has too well convinced me of the contrary. My wife in the morning quarrelled with one of her neighbours in the village, and coming home in a very ill humour, wanted me to join in the bad language with which she shamefully abused her. I refused to do so, and told her that we ought patiently to bear with each other's faults, and as far as in us lay, "live peaceably with all men," for I had read that good precept in my Testament only the day before. But so far from being pacified by what I said, she grew still more angry, and said so many reproachful and cruel things, that I could hardly forbear returning them as I used to do. I did however get the better of myself, though the struggle cost me a return of the pain in my head and stomach. I never gave her an unkind word, yet she continued in a miserable humour, and in the evening was so noisy, and scolded, and beat the poor children till I could bear it no longer. When once I began to speak harshly to her, I lost all guard over myself, and—O! Madam, I will tell you all;—I

mingled *oaths* with my reproaches, and even struck her. The moment I had done this, my conscience awoke within me, and seemed to say, "What art thou doing, wretch? are these the words and actions of a christian? a follower of the meek and holy Jesus? does thy Bible teach or allow thee to act thus?"

I sat down trembling from head to foot, in great bodily pain, but the anguish which I suffered in my mind was far worse, when I recollected all that I had said and done, how entirely I had forgotten all my good resolutions, all my promises to God and you. After a while, I tried to say something to soften my wife, but she told me that she had long suspected what my fine talking of religion would end in, and now saw plainly, that when I got well, I should be worse than ever. I attempted to say no more, and with difficulty crawling up stairs, went to bed. But, O! Madam, what a night did I pass there! Once when I dropped asleep, I thought I saw you in the form of an angel, reaching out your hand from the clouds, and inviting me to come to you: but when I strove to rise, I was pulled down deeper and deeper, into a black and horrible pit! O Madam, after this fearful dream, I could sleep no more. "It is surely to be so," said I, "all that this dear lady has done to save me will come to nothing! I shall return to my sins, and be lost in the pit of destruction!" This dreadful thought has tormented me ever since, and if you cannot give me any comfort, all will soon be over in this world, and I shall go to receive the reward due to my evil deeds.

Lady. I can give you comfort, my friend, comfort from the true source,—from the sacred *word of God*.—"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, unto our God, and he will abundantly pardon."

Thomas. Ah! Madam, can I resolve more earnestly and sincerely than I did before? and yet how

miserably have I failed ! What the better am I for knowing what is right, unless I had the grace steadily to pursue it ?

Lady. Pray then, pray fervently for this grace, and doubt not but you will be heard. You have indeed proved the power of bad habits, how prone they are to return, and how weak a life of sinful indulgence leaves us. But be not cast down ; though you are weak, God is strong, and if you do your part, fear not but he will enable you to get the better of those evil inclinations which have hitherto been your masters. Once you loved and cherished, but now you hate and strive against them ; is not this a blessed change ? O my friend, be comforted with the happy assurance that you have already entered that strait and narrow road which leadeth unto life. Let the sad experience of yesterday make you more watchful, and every victory that you gain over yourself will add to your strength, till at length you get habit on the side of virtue. When this is done all hardship will be over, and you will reap the happy fruits of righteousness, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance !" All these truly christian virtues will dwell in your heart, and every day that you spend upon earth, will assist in preparing you for heaven.

Thomas. Thank you, thank you, madam, for your comfort and your counsel. I will strive to take heart, and begin my course again. The hardest things that I shall have to bear are, the taunts and reproaches of my wife, and the difficulty of bringing about any good change in the children, while she remains the same.

Lady. Look upon this, then as a chief trial of your patience, and call forth your full strength to support it well. In a short time, I trust you will be able to return to your work, and when she sees that you always come home sober and good tempered, and bring your full wages, depend upon it you will soon

find an alteration in her ; and as you will then be able to send your children to school, they will be kept from harm, and learning what is good.

Thomas. You are, indeed, my good angel. You fill me with hope, and drive away my fears. But that dream : do you put any faith in dreams ?

Lady. None, none at all. My faith rests solely on the goodness, the mercy, and the promises, of God. And as nothing can shake or alter these, what but a knowledge that my own ill conduct has cut me off from the benefit of them, what can have the power of troubling me ? From the greatest to the least, all that happens upon earth, happens by his permission ; and while this mighty, this all-powerful ruler is our *Father* and our *Friend*, what can we have to fear ? Come what may, happy and secure is the condition of the real christian. He looks beyond the present scene, and may exclaim in the sublime language of the prophet, " Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine ; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat ; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls : yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

Thomas. O Madam, how happy are you, in having led a life that enables you to repeat those words from your heart. Could I ever bring myself to a settled course of piety and goodness, I would not envy the king upon his throne. Do you think it possible for such a one as I to reach to that state of blessedness ?

Lady. I do, my friend, I think it very possible ; and I rejoice to see that you aim at such perfection. Keep God in all your thoughts, and you will every day draw nearer to him. Try to open the understanding, and soften the hearts of your wife and children, and as I trust you will never disgrace your christian profession by such another scene as that of yesterday, assure yourself that he will prosper your pious endeavours for their good.

Thomas. What a blessing is a real friend, such a one as I have found in you! It was your goodness that awakened me from the state of carelessness and sin, in which I had lived for many years. Indeed, I may truly say, that till you explained it to me, I never knew what love to God, or to my fellow-creatures, meant. I went on from day to day, thinking only of what passed before my eyes, and trying to please my own wayward humours. But there is no comfort, no real satisfaction, in such a life : it is little better than that which is led by the beasts of the field. They can eat and drink and sleep as well as we. But you have taught me, and my Bible tells me, that I was made for a higher and a nobler purpose ; that my great business in this world is, to fit myself for the next, by rooting out of my heart what is base, false, and wicked, and planting in its room all that is kind, and just, and true ; and notwithstanding my sin of yesterday, I will, by God's good help, endeavour to do this.

Lady. I will answer thee in the words of the pious psalmist : " Wait thou upon God, trust in him at all times, pour out your heart before him. In God is our salvation, and our glory ; the rock of our strength, our refuge is in God. Trust not in oppression nor in wrong, if riches increase, set not your heart upon them ; for God hath spoken once, and twice have I heard the same—that *power belongeth unto God* : also unto the Lord *belongeth mercy*, for he rendereth to every man according to his works."

Thomas. What a blessing to you madam, has been the study of the Scriptures : you seem to know them almost by heart, and can, therefore, consult them every hour, and call them in to regulate every action of your life.

Lady. That has ever been my wish and aim ; and I am anxious not only that you should do the same, but by degrees, you should make your family well acquainted with them. Your wife, I think, cannot

read ; therefore, you should take frequent opportunities of reading to her. At first, only a few verses at a time, and chosen from the plainest and most interesting parts : and let this never be done but when her temper is undisturbed, for your great object must be, to make her perceive that true religion is as delightful as it is profitable, and promotes our happiness in this world, while it secures it in the next.

Thomas. I understand you, Madam, and I will treasure up your counsel in my heart. I am quite a different creature from what I was when you came here this morning, for my precious hopes of heaven are returned, and my bodily strength seems to have come with them, for, at this moment, I scarcely feel that I ail any thing.

Jane now entered the kitchen, and the widow desiring her to sit down, spoke as follows :

Lady. I rejoice to find your husband so much recovered, and hope, in a short time, he will be able to return to his work ; after which, I trust, you will forgive each other's faults, and live in more comfort than you have done before.

Jane. I wish it may be so, Madam, but I seldom see that people mend as they grow old ; they much oftener become worse, and I expect it to be so with Thomas.

Lady. The faults have not all been on his side, and if he is resolved to grow better, I hope you will gladly follow his good example.

Jane. Yes, yes, I may easily promise to be as good as he will. The very first money he gets, I know will go to the public-house.

Thomas. I cannot wonder that you should think so, because you can only judge from what I have been ; but I hope the remainder of my life will prove me an altered man.

Jane. I don't like to expose you before Madam, or I would remind you of your fine behaviour yesterday. That shows how much you have altered.

Thomas. I own my fault, and have confessed it to God, and to this excellent lady. Forgive me, my dear Jane, and I trust you will never see the like again.

Jane. There is nothing so cheap as fine promises, they cost nothing at all; but the next time you get into a passion, I know what will be the end of them.

Thomas. You have had too much reason to think so, but I hope, in time, to shew you how great a change religion can bring about.

Jane. To be sure, you have much right to talk of religion, after swearing as you did last night; and that, when you had been sitting half the day with the Testament in your hand.

Thomas. I am heartily sorry and ashamed of what I did last night; but I hope to make you amends, by doing so no more.

Lady. Do not reproach your husband, but kindly forgive what is past, and endeavour to encourage and strengthen his good resolutions of amendment.

Jane. I hate nothing so much as to hear people talk about religion who lead bad lives. I was never taught to read, but I know that the Bible is not a thing only to preach about, and to talk about, but to make us live in a sober and godly manner.

Lady. You think and speak most justly; that true religion which is acceptable in the sight of God our heavenly Father, will teach us "to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world." In the same degree that we do this, in the degree that we do good to others, and are pure and holy in our hearts and lives, may we account ourselves religious. "Little children," says the beloved apostle, "let no man deceive you, he that doeth righteousness is righteous." "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments."

Thomas. By that test, by the test which Christ himself hath given us, do I in future desire to be judged. By their fruits ye shall know them,"

says our heavenly teacher. If I again frequent public houses, spend the Lord's day in idle amusements, or use my wife and children harshly or passionately ; then conclude me a hypocritical pretender to religion, for such characters by their actions renounce Christ, whatever their words may say. But if, by the powerful help of God, I am enabled to forsake my sins, let me, while on earth, be called by the glorious name of Christian, and look humbly forward, with trembling hope, to the second coming of my Lord, to wake the dead, and call them to his judgment seat. O that I may then be numbered with the lowest of his followers, and cast myself before the throne of mercy.

Lady. Amen, my friend, from the bottom of my heart I say *Amen*. May you be enabled fully to perform all that you piously intend. May God "count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the word of faith with power ; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in him."

The good widow's eyes filled with tears, and she left the cottage, after desiring Jane to come as usual for her husband's dinner every day, till he was able to return to work : which she cautioned him not to do, till his strength was tolerably restored.

On her arrival at home, a letter was put into her hand, which informed her that her late husband's uncle, on his road from Ireland to Bath, had been taken dangerously ill at Shrewsbury, and having only servants about him, entreated her to come to him for a few weeks, as he had no doubt but her kind care, and the comfort of her company, would greatly contribute to his recovery.

Mr. Mansfield, the person from whom this letter came, had gone in early life to the island of Jamaica, where, by cultivating a large sugar plantation, he, in a course of years, gained a very considerable fortune ; and, as increasing wealth made him wish for a little repose from the incessant attention which he

had hitherto paid to business, he wrote to his brother, a worthy tradesman in Manchester, desiring him to send his only son, who was at that time in his twentieth year, over to him, that he might relieve him of a part of his fatigue, and hereafter share in the increasing profits of their joint labours.

The brothers had never been upon very intimate terms, for their characters and pursuits had been widely different. The love of money, and the selfish enjoyments which money can purchase, had always been a chief object with the elder; while the younger, with a small capital, had early entered into business, married a worthy young woman with little fortune, and lived beloved and respected by all who knew him, for his liberal and honourable dealings, and for the friendly assistance which he was ever ready to bestow upon all who wanted, and came within the reach of his moderate ability. This happy couple had a son, who, from his infancy, promised to be the comfort and solace of their lives. While a mere child, the bible was continually in his hands, and so well did he even then comprehend its sacred precepts, that his whole character and conduct appeared to be formed upon them. His parents could not hesitate with respect to his future profession; he seemed formed for the ministry, and, after giving him the best learning a neighbouring school could afford, they sent him to a proper seminary to finish his education.

It was vacation time, and he was just returned from thence, when his uncle's letter arrived. The offer, in a worldly point of view, was a great one, but neither parents nor son could have a wish to accept of it, when they considered how superior to worldly wealth was the prospect so excellent a youth looked forward to, in becoming an able and zealous minister of the gospel. "If we should comply with your uncle's request," said the father, "the climate may hurt your health, and living among people who,

after enslaving their fellow-creatures, treat them as beasts of burden, may harden your heart ; and, excellent as your disposition is, in the end ruin your morals. And could all the riches of the Indies make us amends for that ? No, no, my son, the profession which you have chosen is, of all others, most likely to make you a useful, a good, and a happy man ; and if we had millions to bestow upon you, could you be more ?”

A reply, containing a grateful, but absolute refusal, was immediately sent to Jamaica, and this so entirely offended Mr. Mansfield, that, though his brother and nephew repeatedly wrote to him, he neither returned any answer, nor took the least further notice of them, till many years after, when returning to settle in his native country, and hearing that his worthy brother was dead, and his son settled as minister of a large congregation in Lancashire, he resolved to visit him ; and never was a more beautiful picture of true domestic virtue and felicity displayed, than he beheld in this little family. His nephew had been married several years, to the excellent woman who is the chief subject of this work ; his mother resided with them, though she lived but a few months after that time, and the sweet little Fanny was a playful, yet well-instructed child of five years old, the delight of every heart.

Mr. Mansfield could not help being pleased with the scene which was presented to his eyes, and was almost tempted to doubt, whether real piety and virtue do not afford enjoyments preferable to those which the most splendid fortune can offer to our acceptance. But before he had time fully to consider this, he was attacked by an alarming illness, in the course of which, he was so tenderly and so skilfully nursed by his nephew's amiable wife, that he believed his recovery more owing to her, than to his physician ; and it was probably a recollection of this circumstance, that rendered him now so desirous of

her coming to him at Shrewsbury. When he was able to travel, he was advised to go to Bath, and from that time his relations had never seen, and seldom heard from him till the period I am now speaking of; when he was returning from a visit to a friend in Ireland, with an intention of spending the autumn at the Hot Wells, and the winter at Bath.

Mrs. Mansfield was most unwilling to leave home at this time, on account of Thomas, who, she thought, might again want her friendly counsel, to keep him steady in his pious purposes; and poor Sarah, for whom she felt a warm interest, might, she feared, fall back into bad habits, if so soon left to herself. Yet, on the other hand, she was desirous to comply with her uncle's request: he was the nearest relation of her beloved husband, and every one who had been connected with him seemed dear, and almost sacred, in her eyes: she pitied his forlorn condition too, and, at length, resolved to go and give him all the comfort in her power. As her little family was always conducted with the utmost order and regularity, she found that she could so arrange every thing as to be able to set out the next day, which was particularly desirable, as her uncle had sent one of his principal servants to attend her on the journey, and she was unwilling to detain him longer. Of course she had a good deal to do and think of, but, notwithstanding that, she found time in the evening to send for Sarah, wishing to say a few words to her before her departure.

The poor woman instantly obeyed the summons, but seemed quite cast down: "You are going from home, Madam," said she, with a faltering tongue, "O how greatly shall I miss you, and long for your return!"

Lady. I thank you, my good Sarah, for your affectionate concern. It is not without regret that I leave you, and I hope my stay will not be long. How have you gone on since I last saw you?

Sarah. Quite as well as I could hope to do. My mother came on Sunday as I desired, and took care of the young children while I went to the public worship of God. I put myself and them whole and clean, and, indeed, I wished to do no more, for when we go to pray, it should be with an humble heart. We were placing ourselves upon a bench in the aisle, when a young lady opened her pew-door, and bid me bring my children in. I was sorry to be so troublesome, and would have excused myself, but she would have it so, and putting the ~~little~~ things upon a seat, kindly bade me sit down by them. This goodness brought the tears into my eyes, and I thanked God that there were more ladies in the world who were meek and lowly to the poor, besides you, dear Madam.

I was delighted with the prayers, the sermon, and the chapters which I heard read out of the bible.— One of these was a sweet and beautiful prayer which Jesus Christ offered up to God, for himself and his disciples. The minister read this in so affecting a manner, that I am sure I shall never forget it. Our Saviour began with saying, that the time of his death was come, and begging that God would glorify him, because he had then finished the work which he had given him to do : and, after that, he says in such sweet words, that he had taught to his disciples all the heavenly doctrines which God had communicated to him, and that they had hearkened to his words, and *believed that God had sent him*. Then he besought his heavenly Father to preserve all his followers from evil, and so to sanctify and fill them with goodness, that as he and the Father were *one*, so the disciples also might be *one* with them ; which would convince the world that *God had sent him*.— This our minister afterwards fully explained in his sermon ; telling us, that Christ was perfectly holy, harmless, undefiled, and benevolent, entirely conformed in heart, words, and actions, to the will of God ; and he said, that, when by following the divine

precepts given by their beloved master, all christians are thus conformed, they will, in the gospel sense, be like the apostles, *one* with God, and with his Son Jesus Christ ; and then all the world will be converted.

O Madam, what I then heard, has hardly ever since been out of my mind ; and before I left the pew, I asked the young lady (who, I have since found, is our minister's daughter), what chapter it was, and she told me it was the seventeenth chapter of John's gospel.

Lady. I rejoice to find that you have reaped such profit and pleasure from what you heard. Only go on as you have begun, and you will be a happy and beloved servant to the best of masters. Does the heart of your neighbour yet begin to soften ?

Sarah. I have done all in my power to oblige her, by keeping the children from going near her garden, and once, when I saw my eldest boy throwing sticks and stones into a codling-tree that hangs over the hedge, which I own with shame, I have often let him do ; I ran to him, and, gathering up the fruit in my apron, took him into the house to tell him, in the best manner I could, that he had been doing a dishonest action, by taking what he knew belonged to another person. The poor child answered, that Mrs. Bennet had a great many apples, while we had none, and it was hard if he might not have those which hung over the hedge ; but I told him, that by the same rule, the ragged beggar woman who was then passing by, might take our clothes which were drying on the hedge near the road ; for she had hardly enough to cover her, while we had others in our box. " If," said I, " we are to take any the least thing that is not our own, how shall we know where to stop ? and thus nobody's property will be safe, and every poor person will be a thief and a robber ! No, no, my child, let it be a little thing or a great thing, we will take nothing that belongs to another,

and then God will prosper what we have, and give a blessing with it."

I then took his hand, and, with the apples in my apron, went straight to Mrs. Bennet. She received us unkindly, and said she was sure I would not have brought them back, if I had not seen her at the window, when I was under the tree picking them up : she was even so cruel as to tell me, that I went into the house to leave a part behind me, and then, with a hypocritical face, came to her with the rest.

Lady. This was a hard trial of your patience, but I hope you bore it like a christian.

Sarah. I hope I did, for I was upon my guard, and resolved, let her say what she would, not to return an uncivil word.

Lady. And how did you part ?

Sarah. When I offered her the fruit, she told me I might take it back to put into pies with the rest : that the value of it was a trifle to her, but she would be glad to live by honest people. This hurt me very much, but it came into my mind, that as all was brought upon me by my past misconduct, it was my duty to bear it. I thought of my boy too, and resolved to set him a good example of patience and humility : so I laid the apples down upon the table, and saying, I hoped she would never again have reason to suspect me or mine, I courtesied, and left the house.

You cannot think, dear Madam, how happy I felt when I sat down in my own kitchen, and thought over what I had done ; never before had I meekly borne unjust reproaches.

Lady. You had reason, my dear Sarah, to rejoice in this ; and I hope the pleasure you have felt from thus looking back upon your own conduct with approbation, will encourage and incite you to go on steadily in the same truly christian course.

Sarah. I hope and think that a christian temper is gaining ground in my heart, for the very day after this happened, I saw Mrs. Bennet, with her head

lapped up in a handkerchief, and guessing that she had the tooth-ache, I ventured to go up to her, and ask if it was so. She answered in her usual proud way, but owned that she had been awake the whole night before by the pain of a hollow tooth. A receipt of my dear mistress's came into my mind, and I inquired whether she had ever tried it. She answered in a haughty manner, that she was not fond of trying those common receipts, and, turning from me, went into the house.

I thought a great deal of her all the day, well knowing how much she suffered, and, hearing the next morning that she was no better, I hurried over my work, and leaving the children with my mother, went to the druggists in town to procure the article, in hopes of being able to give her ease before the following night. She refused, however, to make trial of it.

I went away quite disappointed, though I still thought if the pain should return, my labour might not be thrown away; and the following day, hearing that she was worse than ever, and on the point of sending for a doctor to draw her tooth, I went to her again, and telling her that though it might not ease the pain for some hours, it would be sure to cure in the end, she at length let me put it in.

Lady. I hope to hear that Mrs. Bennet was relieved, and that she has since been grateful.

Sarah. In the course of the following day her husband told me that she was much better, but I would not go in, lest I should seem officious; but yesterday as I was going by her door she stopped me, and saying my receipt had cured her, asked me what it cost, as she wished to pay me for it. I told her the cost was not worth speaking of, and that I was very glad it had been of service to her. She was going to say something more, but I did not desire to be paid, and therefore went hastily away. She was resolved however not to be obliged to me, for she soon after called my little Sally, and gave her half-a-crown. As I

came here to-day, I met her, and in the best manner I could, thanked her for this kindness ; but instead of speaking to me as you do, Madam, she drew herself up and said I was very welcome.

Lady. Do not let her pride and stiffness discourage you ; go on doing her all the good in your power, and in particular be careful not to let your children molest her, and depend upon it you will make her a friend at last. Have you any good news to tell me of your husband.

Sarah. Ah ! Madam, I see no prospect yet. To be sure we have had no quarrels, but that was because I would not quarrel with him. On Sunday morning I asked him to hear little James say his prayer, that sweet prayer which you taught us, hoping that would have led to some good discourse ; but I will not shock you or expose him, by telling you how he answered me. I said no more upon the subject, for it would only have put him into a passion, and directly after dinner he went to the green, and did not come back till late at night. O madam, his heart is very hard ! God only knows whether he will ever be better.

Lady. Do not give up your hopes till you have made a much longer trial ; be patient, and look up to God for a blessing in his own good time upon your pious endeavours.

Sarah. Thank you, Madam, thank you for the good advice, and the comfort that you always give me. I hope I am truly grateful to Him for the change which I already see in my children. The three eldest have learned their prayer, and love to say it, and when I have hushed the infant to sleep, the rest kneel round me while I repeat my own as you advised me, aloud in the midst of them. After I had done so last night, James looked in my face and said, "That Father whom we have in heaven is a great deal better I know than our father here, or I am sure I could not love him as you say we ought to do."

O Madam, how I wished you had been there to

answer him ; I could only press the dear innocent to my bosom and say " God is *all goodness*, and will make you the happiest child in the world if you will be always good." " Then I will," he replied, " I will be always good, and never vex you any more." I cannot tell you how happy I was ; the prospect of my children being good, cheers my heart, and makes me think light of all my troubles.

Lady. It ought, my dear Sarah, to be the first wish of every mother's heart, and the chief object of her endeavours ; and where it is so, she will seldom fail to be successful.

I shall be absent from home perhaps for several weeks, but I have no other directions to leave with you, than to go on as you have begun, keeping God in all your thoughts, and your duty still before your eyes ; and if for a moment you should forget yourself, and do a wrong thing, or say a rash word ; be not too much cast down, or discouraged by it, but entreat pardon from your merciful Father, and redouble your endeavours not to fall into the same again. In this parcel you will find a few things that will be useful to your children, and may the Almighty keep and bless both you and them till we meet again.

The good widow then put a small bundle into Sarah's hand, and she departed with a heart too full to suffer her to speak, and eyes overflowing with tears of grateful love.

It was now late in the day, and Mrs. Mansfield had still many things to do in preparation for her journey, which put it out of her power to speak to Thomas that night. She resolved therefore to write him a few lines in the morning, which she thought might have full as much influence with him during her absence, as any thing that she could have said before she set out. She accordingly rose early, and having given her servant particular directions respecting the food she was daily to provide for him, and for several other sick and aged persons while she was away, she sat down to her desk, and wrote as follows :

My good Friend,

It is not without concern that I leave home at this time, but the illness of a near relation of my late dear husband obliges me to do so, probably for a few weeks, and I cannot go without sending you my most earnest exhortations to go steadily on in the blessed path into which you have happily entered. You must not expect that it will be always smooth and easy, no passage through this world either is, or ought to be so: for without trials and afflictions how shall we learn righteousness. Our beloved Master was "made perfect by suffering," and shall we refuse to taste of the cup from which he drank so deeply! The sorrows of a christian are mingled with sweet hopes and consolations; he knows that the eye of a merciful Father watches over him every moment, and that he will lay no more upon him, than his grace enables him to bear. He knows too that life is short, and that an *eternity* of bliss is placed within his reach. Press forward then towards "the prize of your high and holy calling!" "Be not weary of well doing,"—let nothing discourage or check your progress in christian holiness, and doubt not but that in due time you will reap a full harvest of joy and blessedness.

Farewell, my friend, may "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, give unto you the spirit of wisdom:" may you "put off the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." "May our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, who hath loved us, and given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your heart, and stablish you in every good word and work."

ISABELLA MANSFIELD.

Just as this letter was finished, the carriage came to the door, and all her other preparations having been completed the night before, the good widow stepped into it, and was driven forward towards Shrewsbury.

[To be Continued.]

VILLAGE DIALOGUES.

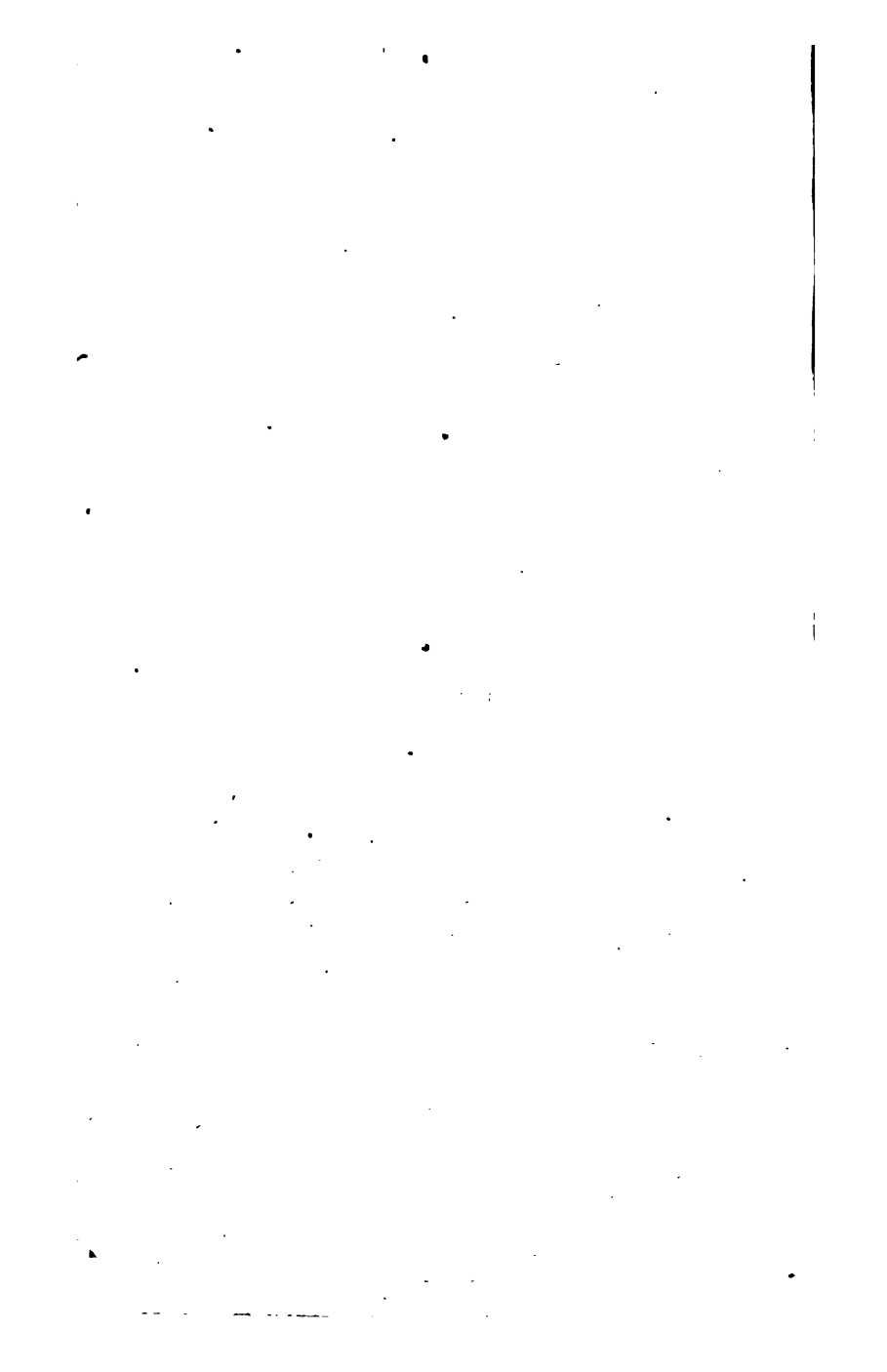
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VILLAGE DIALOGUES.

PART IV.

MRS. MANSFIELD arrived at Shrewsbury after an easy journey of two days, and, at one of the principal inns, found the uncle of her late husband in a still worse state than she expected, though the servant who attended her had represented his master as in some danger. He had for some time been confined to his bed, and the excessive lowness of his spirits made him believe himself worse than his physicians would allow him to be. The coming of his niece, however, appeared to afford him some comfort; for having always attributed his recovery from the illness which attacked him in the house of his nephew, to her unwearied care and tenderness, he thought it possible that the same happy consequence might follow from her attention to him on the present occasion.

The melancholy state in which Mr. Mansfield lay, was doubly oppressive to him, as in the days of youth and health he had anxiously avoided every thing which could lead him to a thought of death. Though advanced in life, he had hoped it was still far distant from him, and now that it seemed to approach, he was filled with terror and dismay. The good Widow could not converse with him as she had done with her beloved husband, when labouring under far severer bodily sufferings, of the gracious purpose for which they were doubtless sent by the Father of mercy, and that, however painful a last illness might be, a good man would be enabled to endure it patiently, and even with thankfulness, by the joyful hope of its removing him from a world of sin and sorrow, and opening to him the gates of everlasting life.

Such discourse as this, which is soothing and

delightful to the mind of the dying Christian, as it assists him to look steadily forward to the unseen state, was painful and distressing to this worldly-minded man. Nothing but a hope of recovery seemed in the least to revive him; capable as his niece was of assisting him to prepare for a change which in the common course of things could not be long delayed, even if it did not immediately take place, he had no wish to benefit by her piety and good sense. He well knew that her ideas of what the Christian character required, stood so much higher than he hitherto had, or in future should be willing to aspire to the practice of, that he feared to hear her speak upon the subject; for though he was at times full of terror with the apprehensions of what would be his condition in that unknown world, upon the very borders of which he seemed to stand, his faculties were for the most part so benumbed by his disorder, that he had no power even to intend a future change of conduct, if he should be again restored to health; and all that he at present desired, was as much as possible to drive the subject from his thoughts. He had always believed religion to be a gloomy, melancholy thing; and those who have been so unhappy as to form this false notion of piety, and have banished it from their days of youth and health, must, like Mr. Mansfield, feel the misery of wanting its firm support in the weakness of declining years, and in the anguish and weariness of a sick bed.

To find her uncle in this deplorable state of mind, though little more than she feared from her former knowledge of his character, was very painful to the good Widow; but she plainly saw that it was not then a time to attempt more than to lessen, as far as it was possible, his bodily sufferings; and in this she succeeded much beyond her hopes. During the first week, she hardly left him day or night, and he felt such confidence and satisfaction in what she did, and

was so ready to comply with all the directions of the doctors, given through her, that a considerable degree of amendment took place, and he was soon after pronounced out of danger. This gave the sincerest pleasure both to uncle and niece ; to the first because he had, for the present, escaped from an event which he dreaded even to think of ; and to the latter, as she hoped the fears and terrors he had so lately felt, would dispose him to such a change of conduct, as would lessen the probability of their return, upon a similar occasion.

As soon as Mr. Mansfield was sufficiently recovered to be removed with safety, she prevailed upon him to go into private lodgings in an airy part of the town, near the quarry, in which delightful walk she often indulged herself with a solitary stroll. She would gladly have been excused from the regular airings in his carriage, which her uncle took twice a day ; but as he was desirous of her company, she would not refuse it to him. On one of these occasions, as they drove by the hospital and school, which was endowed by a person of the name of Millington, for the benefit of a certain number of the aged and the young, "What a pleasure is it," said she, "to look upon a building like this, where old age and poverty are comforted, and the young instructed and enabled to earn their bread with honesty and credit."

Mr. Mansfield. I do not like the way of getting to heaven by endowing schools and hospitals when we die. It is cheating our relations, and giving away nothing that we ourselves can use.

Lady. I agree with you, dear Sir, that the truly liberal man is he who spares from his own present expenses, to relieve the necessities of others. That alone can be called true Christian charity, or real generosity. But if my fortune were large, and my heirs well provided for, the manner of my disposing of it would depend much upon their characters.

Mr. Mansfield. Then I suppose if they were gay, fashionable people, and lived in a handsome style, you would cut them off with a shilling, and leave all that you are worth to the poor.

Lady. I should indeed be most unwilling that my fortune, whether great or small, should go to furnish second courses, superfluous horses and carriages, superb dresses, or any other expences of the like kind ; as it would add nothing to the happiness or respectability of its owner, but as far as it went, serve to spread and increase the fatal infection of that vanity and luxury which already overflow the land. Therefore if my nearest relations were of that description, I would inquire for some who were worthier, if more distant ; and if I had no such kindred, I would look out amongst my acquaintances for some, whose conduct had proved that they merited more of this world's goods, than fortune had bestowed upon them, and I should think myself fully justified in leaving a large part of my property to these ; and to all charitable and pious institutions to which I contributed, I should hold it my duty, if I believed my heirs not likely to continue them, to leave such a sum of money, as would prevent their suffering any loss by my death.

Mr. Mansfield. Then if your daughter had married a man of fortune, and lived in splendour, I suppose you would have disinherited her as far as it was in your power.

Lady. If the Almighty had spared my darling child, it would have been far from my wish to see her in the situation that you mention. The disposal of a large property, particularly in early life, is a hard trial of virtue ; yet, young as she was, such were her dispositions and principles, that I am persuaded, if left to herself, she would have felt it as a *trust*, a *stewardship*, to be one day strictly accounted for. But had she been married to a man who chose to spend a large income in vanity and selfish grati-

fications, it might have been otherwise ; my child might have been dazzled by the false glare of worldly grandeur, and flattered for a time into a forgetfulness of her superior duties : but had it been so, I should not have thought it right to deprive her of the inheritance of her parents ; though I might think myself at liberty to bestow liberal legacies where I thought they would be likely to promote real goodness, and add to virtuous happiness. *

Mr. Mansfield. Your ideas and sentiments remind me of your husband's father ; he used to talk as you do now. But, my dear madam, what great good can it do, for one person, and one who has little power or influence, thus to set up her own opinions and order her conduct, in opposition to all the world. Suppose you go on thus during your whole life, wearing your widow's weeds, and giving up all the pleasures, and nearly all the comforts which your rank requires ; who will be the gainers by these great sacrifices on your part ? a few poor thankless men and women, who will be idle because you give so much, and abuse you because you give no more.

Lady. The chief good that I hope to do, I own, respects myself. My own is principally the present pleasure, and the future advantage. By following as closely as I can the will of God, as made known to me by his Son and Messenger, Jesus Christ, I secure to myself "that peace of mind, which passeth all understanding," which in my happy days increased my felicity a hundred fold, and in the heavy afflictions with which I have since been visited, has supported, and I may almost say, made me victorious over every sorrow. For, deprived as I am of a husband who was my guide, my teacher, my support and comforter, and of a darling child, who was the delight and solace of my widowed hours,—I am not unhappy, I have still my heavenly Father, who gave me all those blessings, which for wise and good reasons he has now thought proper to withdraw. I feel that he is always

with me, because I endeavour constantly to employ myself in his work. I am content, solitary as my condition may be thought, to remain here as long as he sees fit; nay, I strive to be thankful for every added day, as it gives me a fresh opportunity of proving my devotion to him. But when the summons comes, which will take me to Him, my Creator, Father, Friend! to be where my glorified Master now is, and to join those dear ones whom while on earth he taught me to love,—I trust that I shall meet it joyfully, fully confident in the gracious promise, that “all who die in Christ, will God bring with him.” But to ensure this joy, this triumph even in the presence of the “king of terrors,” I must “be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.”

Here the widow, much affected, paused for some time; but her uncle remaining silent, she thus went on.

Lady. With respect to the poor people, upon whom I bestow what time and money I can spare, I am careful to prevent the latter from being an encouragement to idleness. Extreme want and hopeless poverty, I am persuaded, oftener lead to that than even mistaken charity. What I give is chiefly bestowed upon the aged and the sick, and to afford instruction to the young. We cannot be deceived with respect to the real claims of these; and for their gratitude, I never propose that to myself as an incitement to benevolent actions, though I rejoice where it appears, as a proof of good dispositions in the person who shows it.

To me it is no sacrifice to give up what are called the pleasures of life. In the house of my guardian, with whom you know I lived for some years before my marriage, I had an opportunity of knowing their real value; and I am convinced, that though the amusements and the vanities in which persons of large fortunes often dissipate their time and money, may

appear tempting to those who are not sharers in them, they are far from affording real or lasting satisfaction. Often have I witnessed hours of discontent, vexation and disappointment, for the merest trifles. Sick of themselves, and tired of the company which it cost them so much to entertain, they have been miserable from that weakness of mind which arose from the worthlessness of their daily pursuits and employments.

Of this wretchedness I have partaken, feeling restless and unhappy, without in reality knowing what I had to complain of ; and in this state of apparent prosperity and cheerfulness, but frequent and increasing discontent, every good disposition which nature had bestowed upon me would have been absorbed and lost, had not your nephew rescued me from this worse than Egyptian bondage, a slavery to the foolish fashions of the world, and taught me to live in obedience to the laws of Him " whose service is perfect freedom."

Mr. Mansfield. Few ladies but yourself would have been prevailed upon to quit the pleasures and luxuries of a great house, for the dulness and simple fare of a rural habitation in a country village ; and I think even you must in some respects have regretted the change.

Lady. The true affection and regard which I felt for your nephew made his company a constant delight and improvement to me : every hour of it that I enjoyed, raised my heart more and more from the empty and unsatisfying enjoyments of the present scene, towards that better country to which my dear instructor was so soon removed.

Mr. Mansfield. And could your spirits bear to be continually employed on serious subjects ? Had you no heavy, melancholy hours ?

Lady. Did you find us melancholy ? Did you perceive any traces of such hours, during the few weeks that you spent with us ?

Mr. Mansfield. I must own that I never did. There was an appearance of satisfaction and happiness in your husband's countenance and manner, as well as your own, that I will confess surprised and puzzled me. His close attention to study, and to the duties of his office, which I had many opportunities of observing, seemed a slavery to me, accustomed as I had been to a life of business; yet it appeared no fatigue to him. Once I recollect his going in a wet and stormy day, a walk of several miles, to see a person who had just had a considerable loss by the failure of his banker, which affected him so much, that he was taken dangerously ill. My nephew, I remember, gave me a full account of the poor man's situation, saying that he could not possibly carry on the business by which he had maintained and hoped to provide for his family, without the immediate loan of a pretty large sum of money. Your husband, like his father, had a sweet, yet penetrating eye, and he turned it full upon me, saying, "I can be answerable for the honesty and industry of this man, and hope I shall be able to get it for him, though I know he can give no other security for its repayment." I knew by his look and manner what he meant, and should have offered something towards it, though I am not fond of lending money; but just at that time I had made a large purchase in land, and had only enough left for my current expenses.

Lady. I well remember the time and circumstance that you speak of. My dear husband, that evening, consulted me upon the matter, and we agreed to supply him with a thousand pounds, which prospered so well, that he has since been enabled to enlarge his business, and though he paid regular interest for it from the first, he last year returned the whole sum.

Mr. Mansfield. A thousand pounds was a great deal of money for you to risk out of your small property.

Lady. It was so; but this was a great occasion.

The credit, the well doing, nay, perhaps the very life of a worthy man seemed to depend upon it, and the excellence of his character very much lessened the risk.

Mr. Mansfield. He might have been unfortunate a second time, and I think you had hardly a right to venture so large a part of your child's future fortune, especially as your constant charities would have prevented your laying by any thing to make it up.

Lady. Suppose, dear sir, an opportunity had been offered us, of making a very great advantage of that sum :—would you have blamed our imprudence for running an equal risk ? It would not have caused our ruin, if we had lost it.

Mr. Mansfield. I have run some risks myself in the way of trade, though I never went the lengths that others did ; but then I had my fortune to make, and the old saying is “ never venture, never win.” Nothing great is to be gained without great exertions.

Lady. Upon that principle we acted. We were striving for a kingdom ! a heavenly kingdom, a crown of glory that fadeth not away ! And what could be more likely to further us in this great object, to recommend us to *Him* in whose hand the disposal of it is, than doing our utmost to assist a worthy, suffering fellow creature ? “ In as much as ye have done it to the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me,” says our blessed Lord ; and who that has heard these gracious words, can hesitate to perform a kind and generous action, whenever the happy opportunity offers itself ?

Mr. Mansfield. I cannot say that I have thought much about these kingdoms in the clouds ; but I have contrived to get a pretty solid property here upon earth, which, though it may not be of the very glorious kind that you speak of, I can see, and reap some present benefit from. As to what will happen

hereafter, we know little about it ; but I hope I shall fare as well as my neighbours, though you perhaps think otherwise.

Lady. God forbid that I should judge any man. "To his own master he standeth or falleth." But I will own that I am greatly hurt by your expression of "kingdoms in the clouds." If you are so unfortunate as to doubt concerning the revealed will of God, and want faith in the promises which he hath given us by his Son,—I do indeed pity your condition. To live in the world without feeling that we are under the constant care and protection of its Almighty Ruler, whatever may be our rank or possessions in it, must be most forlorn and wretched.

Mr. Mansfield. Why to own the truth, though I have obtained considerable wealth, I cannot boast of much happiness : nor have I any notion of the sort of happiness which you seem to enjoy. Tell me in what your religion chiefly consists ?

Lady. First and principally in the love of God. To feel and know that there is a Being of absolute power, infinite wisdom, and perfect goodness, who gave us life, and every moment watches over us ; who is our tender father, and will "make all things work together for good to those who love him !" To be fully assured of this, should reconcile us to all the evils that can befall us during our short abode upon earth : indeed it cannot fail of doing so by every one who feels this mighty blessing as he ought. Thus faith in the revealed will of God, at once removes from our minds all the misery and trouble which would otherwise spring from the trying and calamitous events of life. The true believer may be "troubled on every side, yet not distressed ; perplexed, but not in despair ; persecuted, but not forsaken ; cast down, but not destroyed ;" looking meekly up to heaven, he resigns his will to the will of his Creator, knowing that "the end of righteousness is peace and assurance for ever !"

Mr. Mansfield. Well, madam, I do conceive that there may be much consolation in this : religion does appear to be a real support in the days of calamity and affliction ; but what amends does it make to a prosperous man for depriving him of all the indulgences which a plentiful fortune puts within his power ? I mean, what equivalent will it bestow upon him during his abode in this world, for so great a sacrifice ?

Lady. When a true love of God has taken possession of the heart of any man, it is lifted far above what are called the enjoyments of life. Vanity and luxury seem contemptible in his eyes. Instead of envying, he will pity those possessors of wealth, who know no better use of it than to indulge in selfish gratifications, and a mean desire of appearing superior in rank and riches, to those who perhaps excel them in every useful and valuable quality.

True religion, by planting the love of God in our hearts, lifts them far above "the pride of life." Nothing but virtue appears lovely and dignified in the eyes of a truly pious man, and he respects that equally, whether he finds it in the palace of the noble, or the cottage of the peasant. And as the pomp and glare of the world do not dazzle, neither can its pleasures seduce him. He knows that time is the most valuable article which he possesses, and sensible that he shall hereafter be called to a strict account for the use which he has made of it, he dreads to waste any part in the idle amusements which swallow up so large a share of it among the rich and gay. This conduct you will perhaps call strictness, and gloomy self-denial ; but view the real christian, carrying comfort to the house of mourning, cheering the pallid face of poverty, opening the gate of instruction to the young, and soothing the latter days of the aged ! See the true follower of Christ, thus like a ministering angel brightening every countenance, and gladdening every heart that he approaches, and then

tell me whether the good man is not the happy man ? See him too in his peaceful dwelling, amidst the small circle of his chosen friends, those who like himself are devoted to the glory of God, and the good of their fellow creatures ; see him at his frugal but hospitable board, with such guests, and a grateful and affectionate family surrounding it ; see the kindness, the intelligence which beams in every eye, and speaks in every sentence,—and then tell me whether a splendid saloon, a train of servants, or a variety of rich dishes and costly wines, could add to the enjoyment, or increase the real dignity of such a man ?

Mr. Mansfield. You paint from the heart, dear madam, and dip your pencil in glowing colours !

Lady. Ah sir—I draw my picture from a dear original, who at this moment seems to stand before my eyes. It is my beloved husband whom I have thus endeavoured to sketch out ; and I had from my own experience, while I shared this blessed life with him, a full proof that religion hath the power of bestowing much happiness in this world : but the largest and dearest part of the present enjoyment of a pious man, consists in looking forward to the glories and felicities of another state, which the clear and steady eye of faith opens to his view.

Mr. Mansfield. Tell me more plainly what you mean by *faith*, and what you call a *saving faith*.

Lady. The first and grand article of faith, is a belief in the being and perfections of God. Upon this hang all the rest : and as we may almost say that nature has implanted it in every heart, so it is confirmed and strengthened by every object that she presents to our view. “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.”

That the Maker of the world is *all-powerful* and

good, is manifest to every rational creature ; but to know the particulars of his goodness, and to gain a knowledge of his will, we must examine the precious volume in which he is more fully revealed to mankind. Here we have most convincing evidence of his gracious interference, to rescue his creatures from the state of idolatry and wickedness, into which they had plunged themselves in the early ages of the world. All the particulars of the Jewish history are so striking, and at the same time so artless and consistent, as to leave no impression on the mind of the reader, but one favourable to their certainty and truth.—The miracles performed by Moses carry with them such clear evidence in the attestation of a cloud of witnesses, amongst whom, while the facts were recent, they were committed to writing, and with the other books of the old Testament delivered down from father to son for many ages, even to the present day : and in the dispersed and forlorn state in which this people, as a punishment for their obstinate rejection of the Messiah, have been suffered to remain for nearly eighteen hundred years, they still hold them as sacred as their forefathers, who received these “lively oracles” from eye witnesses of their truth.

It is impossible for us to have clearer evidence of “things not seen,” than the Jewish scriptures afford ; and upon this foundation our christian faith is built. To Abraham, the father of the Jews, was a promise given, that from him should descend one, “in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed ;” and a most remarkable prophecy of Christ was uttered by Moses in these words : “A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me ; him shall ye hear.” Many predictions are to be found in the Old Testament, describing him as one who would be “despised and rejected of men,—a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” That he should be “led as a lamb to the slaughter ; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so should he

not open his mouth." Yet he should be "the Prince of Peace, the Father of the Age;" the "government should be upon his shoulders," and "the spirit of the Lord God be upon him."

In the New Testament we have a history of the ministry of Jesus Christ, of the doctrines that he taught, and the miracles that he wrought; and a firm belief that he was the personage thus promised to the world, is the *true christian faith*. What our Lord himself required, was an acknowledgment that he was the Messiah, *the Christ*, the son of the living God." To this faith the Apostles added the great article of God's having sealed the truth of his commission, by raising him from the dead. He who believes these articles, receives, of course, all that Jesus taught, as true: And to make this a *saving faith*, it must be accompanied by a sincere and habitual endeavour after holiness of heart and life.

Mr. Mansfield reflected for some time in silence, and then replied: "Your religion, my dear niece, is consistent; my mind assents to what you say; but I am not prepared to act upon it. I see that you are happier than I, though you want many things that I deem necessary to common ease and comfort. Your happiness too is of a better kind, than that which I have all my life been aiming at: for supposing my large fortune could really bring me all the enjoyments which I once expected from it, still bad health, and the approach of age with its *cureless* infirmities, must come, and deprive me of all, while to you none of these things are evils. An illness is only a trial of your faith and patience, an opportunity of approving both before God; and what I call the miseries of advanced years, will be to you only an assurance that the great and glorious change for which your whole life has been constant preparation, cannot be long delayed. O madam, you have indeed, "chosen that better part," which I trust you will never suffer to be taken from you.

Lady. Then spoke the uncle of my beloved husband ! O sir, let these tears witness with what earnestness I wish, that to a conviction of " the truth as it is in Jesus," you would add that necessary part, a truly christian life. If any thing that I have been able to say should contribute towards it, you know not the delight, the happiness that it would give me.

Mr. Mansfield. Ah madam, there is often a wide gulph between the knowledge of what is right, and the practice of it. I can promise nothing to you or to myself. The world, and the things of the world have for more than sixty years been winding themselves about my heart, and it is no easy task to get released from such a bondage. Habits of luxury and indolence have long had full possession of me, and to tear myself from their grasp seems little less than dividing soul and body. What you have said has made me wish it had been otherwise, but to do more is perhaps beyond my power : I will neither deceive you nor myself by saying otherwise.

Lady. Will you sometimes allow me to renew the subject ? believe me, sir, it will every time be more interesting, and at length become delightful.

Mr. Mansfield. Not much of that at present, my dear niece. If it was only to *talk* about religion, I might perhaps get over my habitual aversion to it, but I am well aware that you would carry me much further. I have not made up my mind to give away half the fortune which I have spent my best days in toiling for ; nor is my state of health such at present, as to make it prudent thus to agitate my mind even with thinking of it.

The good widow again shed tears, but of a different kind from those which had fallen from her eyes when she believed that she had succeeded in touching the heart of her uncle, and convincing him of the unprofitable manner in which a large part of his time and fortune were now bestowed. Those were tears of benevolent hope, but these of bitter disap-

pointment. She wondered how a man of understanding, and such Mr. Mansfield really was, could be so blind to his own interest and happiness as to shut his eyes against the full conviction of truths which he knew most deeply concerned his everlasting welfare: and rather than break off from the idle and worthless habits of his former life, hazard the fearful risk of being called, unprepared, before that awful tribunal, where a strict account of every man's dealings with God and his fellow creatures will be required. She had several times during his illness proposed reading to him from the sacred volume, but he always excused himself, under the pretence of being too weak to attend; though he often asked her to take up the newspaper, which was daily laid upon the breakfast table, and on account of the peculiar softness of her voice, expressed a high degree of pleasure in hearing her. She resolved however for a time to comply with his request, and forbear to introduce the subject which was nearest to her heart, though fully resolved not to leave him till she had at least made one trial more.

Mr. Mansfield's health was now so much improved that he was able to walk out, and receive the visits of several gentlemen of the town who called upon him; and his niece feeling that the task was performed which a regard to the memory of her beloved husband had induced her to undertake, greatly wished to return to a home, which, though solitary, was still the object of her warm attachment, on account of the happy and virtuous days and years that she had spent in it, and because she felt that it was there still in her power to contribute to the comfort and improvement of many. Her uncle was very unwilling to part with her; the sweetness and kindness of her manners, and the good sense and unaffected piety which he had now for several weeks had an opportunity of daily observing in her, had greatly endeared her to him; and he earnestly proposed her

spending the autumn with him at Bath, which he thought would be an agreeable change of scene, and an advantage to her health, which was in a delicate state : but she declined these kind invitations, and with much reluctance he at length consented that she should leave him the following week.

On Sunday, the day before that of her intended departure, as she was preparing, according to her constant custom, to attend the public worship of God, she was most agreeably surprised by Mr. Mansfield's offering to accompany her, which though she had more than once proposed his doing, he had till this time declined. It was the afternoon service, which they could attend without inconvenience, as, to accommodate her, the dinner was never served till it was over. The minister prayed in so solemn and impressive a manner, that Mr. Mansfield's mind was in a considerable degree affected. The sermon enforced and illustrated the beautiful parable of the talents ; the duty of making a vigorous and animated use of those intrusted to us was powerfully enforced by the example of the "good and faithful servants," who for their zeal and activity in the work appointed to them, were exalted to stations of high honour and felicity in the glorious kingdom of the Lord : while he who had led a life of slothful indulgence, neither improving himself, nor benefiting his fellow creatures by the abilities which God had bestowed upon him, was "cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Mr. Mansfield paid a deep attention to this affecting discourse, and after his return home his niece thought she saw something in his countenance and manner which seemed to say that it had made a serious impression upon him. Little was said by either during dinner ; but when it was removed, and the servants withdrawn, she resolved not to lose this opportunity of endeavouring to awaken him to a sense of his real condition. Her expressive features de-

clared her intentions, before her tongue could utter them, and her uncle, after fixing his eyes for a minute upon her face, thus addressed her :

Mr. Mansfield. I know, my dear niece, you wish to ask me whether I am not affected by the solemn service we have to day been engaged in, and with a sermon, which seemed as if particularly directed to me ; and I will own to you that both have reached my heart. During the many years that I spent abroad, I never entered a place of public worship, and since my return home, I have been in the habit of making Sunday a travelling day, a day for writing letters, and in short, a day for any purpose rather than the one for which it is designed : and to confess the truth, I have hitherto looked upon public worship as a matter of form rather than real usefulness, thinking that if a man was disposed to pray or read, he might do it at least with equal advantage in his parlour or his closet. But my experience of to day has convinced me of the contrary, and if I was to continue in Shrewsbury, I think I should prove it by my conduct."

Lady. And why only in Shrewsbury ? Are there no ministers of Christ but in Shrewsbury ?—You told me yesterday that you wished for the power of doing something that would add to my happiness, and really oblige me ; and now, dear sir, I will put your sincerity to the proof. Are you disposed to do me a great favour which is completely within your power ?

Mr. Mansfield. I am, dear madam. Name your request, and I can almost promise not to refuse it.

Lady. Promise me then, that wherever you are, if your health will permit, you will in future constantly attend public worship on Sundays ; and this not merely in the morning, as if in compliance with the customary forms of the world, but twice in the day ; that if a favourable impression should be made, it may be again repeated, before the first wears off. I know you too well to doubt, that if you give your

word, you will fully comply with the spirit of my request: and I shall look upon such a promise as more than a recompense for all the obligations which you kindly tell me I have laid upon you.

Mr. Mansfield. You are surely a most extraordinary woman, and should have been a fellow labourer with those holy men who in old times were commissioned to convert a sinful world. But I am not worthy of your pious endeavours. Think again, dear madam: my indolence is perhaps greater than my avarice, and I would rather supply your benevolence with something considerable for the poor, than undertake thus to fetter myself one day in seven. Come, chuse again.

Lady. Excuse me, sir; you are at full liberty to refuse this my earnest request, but I will make no other; and I cannot express the pleasure which your compliance with this would give me.

Mr. Mansfield. Your kindness and your disinterested goodness make you irresistible. You have twice saved my life, and you are now labouring for the salvation of my soul! Well, madam, your request is granted: and in return for this compliance, I have to ask, that you will never enter the house of God without remembering me in your prayers. This will give me some confidence in the efficacy of what you have required from me.

Lady. Then now, and ever, dear sir, you have my most fervent prayers, that you may imbibe a truly Christian spirit, and increase in virtue and in happiness, to the latest period of your earthly pilgrimage,—and when that shall close, may we meet in those celestial regions, where holiness and felicity will be ever increasing, and never fear an end!

Mrs. Mansfield, much affected, rose up, and taking the hand of her uncle, tenderly pressed it to her lips. He was greatly moved, and affectionately embracing her, took from his desk a note of considerable value, earnestly entreating her acceptance of it; but this she

steadily, though thankfully, refused. "Give it then amongst your poor neighbours," said he, "if you are resolved to take nothing for yourself, surely you cannot scruple to do that."

Lady. For that purpose I will gratefully receive whatever you are pleased to give, provided you will come and witness the effects of your liberality, and accept the thanks and blessings of those on whom it is bestowed. Come, my dear uncle, come and distribute your own bounty; come and enliven my solitary habitation by a visit of a few weeks in the course of the next summer, and I will do all that is in my power to make it agreeable to you.

Mr. Mansfield. I accept your invitation, my dear madam; but make no expensive or troublesome preparations for my reception. My servants and horses shall be at the village inn, and I will live in your own plain and simple way. Who knows but I may there acquire a taste for that solid happiness which springs from virtue, and unfetter my heart from a gross and selfish world. You said the other day, that I ought not to quit a place where I have so manifestly experienced the mercy of God, in a recovery from a dangerous illness, without leaving some mark of gratitude behind. I will therefore give part of this note between the Infirmary, which I hear is well conducted, and extensively useful, and the school for the instruction of poor children, which I find is a new institution, and may want support.

Lady. A thousand times do I thank you for the pleasure which this generous resolution gives me. Often from my lonely dwelling shall my prayers ascend to the throne of mercy,—that God would grant you, "according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your heart by faith:" being confident that "he who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

Mr. Mansfield. Enough, enough, my dear niece;

I have to day heard more on this affecting subject than my nerves can bear. My spirits too are low with the prospect of your speedy departure, and between both, I feel that opium will hardly have the power of composing them to night.

Mrs. Mansfield had some difficulty in turning her thoughts from the pious contemplations in which they delighted to indulge, and fixing them on the common affairs of the world: but it now seemed necessary, and during the remainder of the evening she tried her utmost skill to cheer and amuse her uncle in his own way; and succeeded so well, that his spirits by degrees rose to their usual level, and he in his turn entertained her with some instances which had been related to him of the liberal dealings of her husband's father, who, though he never was rich, had found means materially to befriend many, and some times by lending small sums of money to industrious young men, and at the same time assisting them with his advice and recommendations, had laid the foundation of respectable and worthy families, and of fortunes much larger than his own. Mr. Mansfield had before hinted at some of these circumstances, as instances of folly and imprudence in his brother; but he this evening spoke in terms of commendation, which gave heartfelt pleasure to his niece, as it clearly manifested a favourable change in his own sentiments.

As the Widow wished to set out early the following morning, she took a tender leave of her uncle, when they parted for the night. He pressed her to make use of his carriage, but she would only be prevailed upon to accept of the attendance of his principal servant, who, by his master's orders, defrayed all her expenses on the road, and carefully attended upon her till she reached her beloved home, from whence she had been absent nearly two months.

She was joyfully welcomed by her faithful servant, and her first inquiries were respecting the welfare

of her poor neighbours, of whom she on the whole received a favourable account. She felt satisfied and thankful to find herself again in peace and safety, under her own roof, and many tender thoughts of those who were wont, in her happier days, to greet her return to it, after the shortest absences, with joy, filled her mind for the remainder of the evening. When she retired at night, after having paid a tribute of praise and adoration to the great Protector and Preserver, for this additional instance of his goodness to herself, she offered up a fervent prayer for him who had been of late the chief object of her care and solicitude. "O heavenly Father," said she, "convert his heart, loosen it from the things of the world, and fix it on Thyself! While there is yet time, while the short day of life continues, may he turn to thee, with all the powers which thou hast bestowed upon him. Seeing the folly and vanity of his present pursuits, and feeling the dignity of his nature, and the high destination for which he was formed, may he by studying the holy precepts which thou has given us by thy beloved Son, and diligently striving to obey them, be enabled to 'work out his salvation;' being henceforward 'filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ our Lord, to the glory and praise of Thee, the Father of All.'"

Devout and heavenly contemplations continued to fill her mind, till she fell into a sweet and refreshing sleep, such as the oppressors of the earth, the conquerors, or the plunderers of mankind, or even those lesser culprits, the avaricious, the selfish, the arrogant, and the dissolute, must sigh in vain to experience. During its short intervals, every thought breathed gratitude to God, and love to her fellow-creatures; and when an airy vision was pictured to her imagination, her husband and her darling child seemed leading her through the courts of glory, into the more immediate presence of the Omnipotent Father of spirits!

Ah reader ! wouldest thou see these beatific visions? wouldest thou thus visit in imagination the regions of the blest? Lead then a life like that of her whose character and conduct I am now describing, purifying thyself from all the corruptions that are in the world, and "perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord."

The *virtue* and goodness which Mrs. Mansfield possessed, are, in their different stations; within the reach of all. Every one may like her serve God in sincerity of heart; be a Christian indeed, "in whom there is no guile." All who can read may study the Scriptures as she did, which will not only enable them to order their own conduct according to their holy precepts, but to give much useful advice and information to others; and for worldly possessions, her share was far from large, but she spared from herself, and gave up all the luxuries and vanities of life, that she might be able more liberally to relieve the wants of her brethren; and this practice would furnish to most of us, the means of bestowing more in charity than we are perhaps aware of. Vanity and the love of pleasure have brought many to want, but I have never known any one impoverished by the liberal exercise of benevolence. Money so expended leaves a blessing with what remains, and every one's own observation will convince him if he looks around, that "There is who scattereth and yet increaseth, and there is who withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." But should our circumstances be such as barely to afford to ourselves the necessaries of life, true Christian love in our hearts will still enable us to give much assistance and consolation to the sick, the aged, the ignorant and the unhappy. To set an example of pious and cheerful submission under poverty, or afflictions of any kind, is to benefit all who are within its reach, and there can be no situation in which a truly good man will not make himself useful and respectable to those who are connected with him.

The worthy Widow had just breakfasted on the morning after her return home, when she was told that Thomas's wife desired to speak with her, and bidding the servant to send her in, was agreeably surprised at the complete change which had taken place in her appearance. Instead of a gloomy air of misery and discontent, she saw a cheerful and happy countenance: and instead of slatternly and dirty clothing, her dress was singularly neat, and perfectly clean. "I am glad to see you, my good Jane," said she, "sit down and tell me how your husband has performed his promises during my absence."

Jane. O madam, I did so long to tell you how good he is, and how happy I and the children are, that the minute I heard the joyful news of your coming home, I put on my things and set out. But I fear I have been too bold in coming so soon.

Lady. Not at all; I am quite as desirous of hearing all that you have to say, as you can be to tell me.

Jane. Thank you, thank you, madam, for all your goodness; I and mine are bound to bless and pray for you, as long as we live. The letter that you wrote to Thomas, was brought to him the very day that you went, and I never saw any thing like him when he read it; his countenance changed again and again, and the tears ran down his cheeks. I asked him what you could have put into it, to affect him in that manner, and he told me, when he had considered it a little, he would read it to me, which he accordingly did, and I could almost have cried myself, for I never heard any thing so moving. Well, madam, this letter, or his Testament, was hardly out of his hand all the week, and on Sunday he would have us all go with him twice to public prayers, and walked with us, and read for us, and was so good tempered, that I said to myself, "If there was no such place as a public house, I do think all would be well." On Monday morning he would go to work, though

he was still so weak as to be able only to earn half wages, which is little more than the allowance from his club came to, and I wanted him to rest another week : but he said he would spare the club to the utmost of his power, and that though he could not do much, he knew a little work would do him good, and prepare him for the harvest, which was almost ready to cut. The week after he went to work in earnest, and I was amazed to see him come home every night quite sober, though it was otherwise with many of our neighbours ; and on Saturday he brought me home such a sum of money as he had not done for many a day. I asked him how he had got so much, and he told me that he had agreed for an advance of wages during the harvest, in consequence of his requiring but half the usual quantity of liquor, by which means he should not only get more money, but preserve his health and his senses, and recover the good opinion of his master. I could hardly believe my own eyes and ears, and taking the money, I said, " O Thomas, I should be but too happy if this would last." " Pray then to God," said he, " that I may have strength to pursue what is right."

And he has pursued it sure enough, from that day to this : bringing home every penny that he gets, and being so kind to me and the children, that the world seems quite a different place from what it did two months ago.

Lady. I am delighted with this good account, and I hope, dear Jane, you endeavour in every thing to oblige, and make your husband happy ; and that you do your utmost to instruct your children to do the same.

Jane. I hope both I and they are better than we used to be. Thomas reads a fine prayer to us every night, and says he will beg of you to put down a short one for the children to learn. We never quarrel now, and he is so good and gentle, that I must be a wicked wretch indeed if he did not mend me. What

a wonderful thing religion is ! to change a tiger, as I may almost say he once was, into a perfect lamb.

Lady. True religion is indeed powerful ! “ The word of the Lord hath the pre-eminence, and bringeth mighty things to pass.” Strive then with all your might, to fix it firmly in the hearts of your children, for no other guide can conduct them safely through a dangerous and evil world.

Jane. Thomas is always trying to do that, and God seems already to prosper him, for they are far more mild and teachable than they used to be. It certainly is exactly as you said, dear madam, they take example by what they see. But you have not yet heard the very chief thing that I had to tell you. My eldest daughter, poor Patty, whom I had not seen for four years, was in a good service at Chester, where she caught a fever, and though her mistress was so good as to have a doctor, and nurse her till she was cured, yet she gained no strength, and could not do the work of her place. I had just heard this sad news, and was weeping over it, when Thomas came from work. He asked me very kindly what was the matter, but I was afraid to tell him, because he never used to love this poor girl : but he would know what I was crying about, and when I had told him : “ Make yourself easy,” said he, “ I will write to Patty, and ask her to come here for a few weeks. Our fresh country air, with the blessing of God, will soon bring her about, and she is heartily welcome to all that this house affords.”

O madam, I was so full of joy that I could not answer him, and cried more than ever ; but when I could speak, I thought I never could thank him enough : and from that hour determined never to cross him again, cost me what it would. Well, he wrote that very night, and yesterday week my dear child came, and would you believe it, Thomas received her just as if she had been his own daughter, and has behaved like a father to her ever since, and

the poor thing is grown so fond of him, and recovers her strength so fast, that it makes me more happy than I can tell you.

Lady. And I, dear Jane, fully partake in your happiness, and wish that all persons in your station could see the blessed change which Thomas's conversion has brought about in his family. From a scene of discontent and misery, of poverty and wretchedness, it is become the abode of peace and comfort. Even in these hard times the profits of a poor man's labour, if he has constant work, will support his family; and if his wife does her utmost to assist him, and is as frugal in spending as he is industrious in getting, they may even lay by a little against sickness and old age.

Jane. I have often thought, madam, when Thomas was putting by the money for his club, that if he spent nothing in public houses, he might spare twice as much, and we live better besides: and by the same rule now that he brings home all he gets, we shall surely have something to spare. I am better in heart too than I used to be, and will strive more to help him, and if we can lay by but sixpence in a week, it will come to a sum in time. But we must first finish paying our debts, for while he was ill we got a good deal behind-hand, and Thomas will never be easy till every one has his due; and then the children are to be sent to school, and the first money we can spare after that, is to go for a Bible.

Lady. I am so much pleased with all your plans, that I will furnish you with a Bible. So, as soon as your debts are paid, begin to save, and for every pound that you bring me, I will give you a shilling a year interest. You shall have a written security from me for the money, and whenever you want the whole, or any part, come and ask me for it. My beloved husband always did this by his servants and poor neighbours, and I am desirous as far as my ability will permit, to carry on all his benevolent works.

Jane. O madam, how can I ever thank you enough for all this goodness. I shall talk of you every day as Thomas does ; and we and our little ones will never say a prayer without calling down blessings from Him, who only can reward you. My husband will so rejoice to hear of your return ; and who is there indeed that will not, for every person in the village has at one time or other felt your kindness.

Lady. Let your praises, let your thanks be offered up to God, the Father and benefactor of all mankind. I have no other pleasure, no other business upon earth, than to press forward in the course which my beloved master has marked out, and to persuade all within my reach to do the same, by convincing them that the ways of righteousness are pleasant, and that all "her paths are peace."

Go then to your family, remembering that He who ruleth the heavens, is also present in your lowly habitation, is "about your path, and about your bed, and spieth out all your ways!" Keep this benevolent Father, this All-seeing Judge continually in your thoughts, and diligently strive to render your way acceptable in his sight. "And hereby do we know that we know him, if we *keep his commandments*. He that saith I know him, and keepeth *not* his commandments, is a *liar*, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected."

The poor woman with eyes full of tears, went silently away, leaving the heart of the benevolent widow filled with gratitude to the great giver of *All*, for the happy prospect of increasing piety and comfort, which manifested itself in this little family.

VILLAGE DIALOGUES.

PART V.

MRS. MANSFIELD was surprised, that the second day after her return from the long visit which she had paid to her uncle in Shrewsbury should pass without Sarah's having called to see her ; but being much engaged in settling her household concerns, and receiving the visits of her neighbours, she could not send for her till the following evening, when she kindly desired her to come at the usual hour of drinking coffee. At the time appointed the poor woman came, full of joy and gratitude: "O madam!" said she, "how thankful am I to see you once again at home! Had I not feared to be too bold, I should not have waited to be sent for. You stayed so long away, that I began to be full of fears that you would not come back."

Lady. I thank you, my good Sarah, for your kind solicitude, and am glad to find myself again under my own roof. How has the time of my absence passed with you? I shall rejoice to hear that you have been getting forward both in goodness and in comfort.

Sarah. On the whole, dear madam, I trust that both I and my condition have been mending. My chief endeavour has been to keep God and my duty always in my thoughts, and by one contrivance or other I have been able to go with my three eldest children to prayers every Sunday but one, since you left us ; so that I have heard more of the Bible, and many fine sermons, which I strive to remember and turn to profit ; and, according to your good advice, I in the evening repeat to my young ones all that I can recollect of what I have heard ; and though they do not fully understand all that I say, yet the poor things love to hear me, and it impresses it upon my own mind.

I wish I had any thing good to say of my husband, but he goes on much in the old way. During the

harvest he was so ill for several days as to be unable to work : but I nursed him in the best manner I could, and did not reproach him, only saying it would be well if he would save himself from more pains and losses of the same kind, by being sober. He made me no answer, knowing that what I said was true ; and I was careful not to say too much, lest it should make him angry ; for there is no good done, but a great deal of harm, by putting any one into a passion ; and I think he has, upon the whole, behaved rather better since that time, both to me and to the children.

Lady. The smallest sign of amendment should encourage you to go on still in the same good way. Try to prevail upon him to go with you to the house of prayer, he may there hear something that will reach his heart : but if he is obstinately set against this, as I think you once told me he was, do not make yourself unhappy about what you cannot alter. Continue patiently to bear with his faults, and set him the best example in your power. By doing this you will act a truly christian part, and whether you succeed or fail, your own reward will be secure.

Sarah. O madam ! I am already far happier than I was before you put me into this blessed way. Whenever any thing used to vex me, I cried and fretted as if my heart would break, having no one to complain to, no one to console me ; but now I look humbly up to God for comfort, and never fail to find it. Most that I have to suffer is from poverty, and the unkindness of my husband : and surely I ought to be patient under these, when I remember that my Saviour had “ not where to lay his head,” and was forsaken and persecuted by those, to bring about whose salvation he both lived and died ! I know that I ought to rejoice in every opportunity of imitating my Master, and I hope I do rejoice, even when my eyes are full of tears.

Lady. I love you, dear Sarah, for this pious frame of mind, and I entreat you above all things to endeavour to infuse it into your children.

Sarah. It shall be my daily care. By your bounty

Village

the two eldest go
have the delight of
day shall pass with
the word of God, and
of his holy will, and
children.

Lady. How have
bour, Mrs. Bennet?

Sarah. Very peace-
used to be; but, as I
dren from giving her
no complaints, and we
She has lately been trou-
ness in her head, and I
help her with her work, which is now more than she
is well able to do; and she often lets me bake for
her with the yeast which I make myself, and says
the bread is the best she ever tasted.

Lady. And how do you make this yeast? My ser-
vant has sometimes much trouble in procuring what
is good; and, if it really answers, I shall thank you
for the receipt.

Sarah. It answers so well, that my good mistress,
of whom you have heard me say so much, seldom
used any other; and the trouble is no more than
this:

Boil a potatoe till it breaks in pieces, and while
the water is warm pour it nearly all off. To the po-
tatoe, in this very moist state, add a dessert spoonful
of coarse sugar, and a tea spoonful of common yeast.
Beat the compound up with a wooden spoon, and the
yeast is made. Common yeast is only wanting the
first time, what sticks to the wooden spoon will
afterwards supply its place.

This receipt has been of the greatest use to me
ever since I kept house; but till lately I was so sel-
fish as never to have mentioned it to any one. But
about a month ago our minister preached a sermon
on these fine words of Jesus Christ: "Whatsoever

harvest he was so would do unto you, do ye even to work : but I this is the law and the prophets." In and did not he clearly made out, that it is the well if a Christian to do all that is in his power to losses every one within his reach both good and me ; and that to do this from love and thankfulness to God, and in obedience to his holy will, is all that the law and the prophets were designed to teach. Before I heard this, I thought we had little or nothing to do in the way of duty, but with our own families and friends ; and that all the rest of the world had a right to expect from us was to be let peaceably alone. But I now find, that if I know any thing likely to be useful to another person, it is not a matter of choice to me whether I will or will not acquaint him with it, but, as a Christian, I am bound in conscience to do so ; and since I have been convinced of this, I have, to the utmost of my power, communicated the little knowledge that I possess.

Lady. You cannot give a clearer proof of your being a true follower of Christ than by uniformly acting thus. What the world calls ill-nature is in reality a vice of a malignant kind, though many great pretenders to religion are guilty of it. If we love our fellow-creatures, we shall delight to do them good, and contribute to their happiness by every means within our power. There was a time, dear Sarah, when you took pleasure in Mrs. Bennet's uneasiness, and many indulge themselves in such unchristian feelings ; but if we smile at the pain or mortification of another, it is too plain that, had it been in our power, we would have caused that pain or mortification, unless we had been deterred by selfish motives. Let us then watch carefully over our own minds, and, if we perceive that pleasure arises within us at hearing of the losses or uneasiness of any one, take ourselves severely to task, and pray earnestly to get the better of the evil disposition from whence such feelings spring. "He that loveth his

brother," (and every one of the human race is included in the term *brother*,) "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him." If we feel a *real active* good-will towards *all* our brethren of mankind, there will be no fear of our offending their heavenly Father by our neglect or unkindness towards them; for our own hearts will powerfully prompt us to embrace every opportunity of assisting and befriending them. But if we behold any one without having this desire to do him good, our feelings are not those which belong to a real disciple of Christ. "Who-soever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."

Too many even of those the world call worthy, need much to be reminded, that this love, in which we are required to abound towards all, is an active principle of benevolence, and not the mere absence of hatred or ill-will, which is all that some think necessary in their feelings towards mankind in general, and should not only be manifested by our humility, gentleness, and charity, towards the poor, but by an endeavour to please, oblige, and benefit all, of whatever rank, who come within our reach.

Sarah. How exactly, dear madam, does your practice agree with your precepts! It was but the other day that I heard Mrs. Green of the shop talking of you, on this very subject. She said that before she came to settle here, she was so proud that she hardly ever spoke to a poor person but in the way of business; for she had always seen every one striving to keep company with those above them; and even fine ladies, who were very good and humble to the poor, would scarce speak to the highest farmers' wives, or even the lower sort of gentry. But when you called to see her, and behaved so kindly, she saw what a beautiful thing *real* humility was: and your conversation with her, she said, on that and many other subjects, and your fine exam-

ple, had taught her to look upon no one as beneath her, but to love and do good to every body. And indeed all her neighbours say how kind she is ; but I did not know, till then, that you, dear madam, had taught her.

Lady. As children of the same glorious parent, and heirs of the same heavenly inheritance, the trifling distinctions of rank or riches ought not to be the means of dividing us from each other. With the vicious of whatever station we should, as far as it is possible, refuse to have any intercourse or connexion, unless we have a rational prospect of reforming them : but every true disciple will discard from his mind the sin and folly which we call pride, by attending to the words of his Redeemer : “ One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.”

At this moment one of Sarah's children came to tell her that she was immediately wanting at home. The good widow kissed the little rosy messenger, and putting a large piece of plain cake into his hand, bade him give it to his mother to put by till Sunday, when, after evening prayers, it should be divided among the family. A low bow, and a dimpled cheek, expressed the pleasure which this little present had conferred, and Sarah thankfully promised to dispose of it according to her directions.

As soon as Mrs. Mansfield supposed that her uncle was arrived at Bath she wrote to him, for at parting he had expressed an earnest desire to hear often from her ; and before she thought this letter could have reached him, an answer was put into her hand, which she opened with some anxiety, and read as follows :

“ My dear Niece,

“ You will wonder at hearing from me so soon, as I told you to expect but an indifferent correspondent : but a matter has just occurred which gives me very great uneasiness ; and I have of late been used

to unburden my heart to you, and have found so much comfort in so doing, that I cannot help applying to you upon the present occasion. While we were together at Shrewsbury, I often talked to you of my cousin and intended heir, William Mansfield, and told you that in the early part of his life, soon after your husband had refused an offer of the same kind, I had sent for him to Jamaica, where he continued with me many years, and when I finally quitted that island I left him in a situation where with proper care and attention he could not, in a course of years, fail to make a fortune equal to my own. I also told you that he was married, not entirely indeed to my satisfaction, for, in point of interest, I know he might have done better, but to a sensible and worthy woman, who has brought him no less than six children, the two eldest of whom being boys, he some time ago sent at a large expense to England to be educated by a friend at Bristol. I thought him too hasty in doing this; but the old saying is, "Get gold and use it." I had no doubt but he was getting money by handfuls, and only told him that he must be in no hurry to do the same by the rest. Soon after that time he began to complain that the climate had injured the health of his wife; and one of his children dying of a fever, his discontent seemed rapidly to increase, and he plainly said that he would gladly give up three-fourths of his profits, if he could enjoy the rest in a country where he should not be in continual fears for the lives of his family. I did not much relish this declaration, and in return reminded him that it had been his own fault to encumber himself with a wife before he was in circumstances to maintain her how and where he pleased. But as I really loved him, and knew his strong attachment to her, I advised him to send her and the children home by the next fleet, meaning the one which is just now come in, and then make up his mind, by lessening his expenses as much as possible,

and attending closely to business for ten or twelve years, to enable himself to follow them with a tolerable fortune. I promised, too, to notice and assist his family to the utmost of my power.

“Most, or all of these particulars, I believe I mentioned to you, and I remember you wished that my cousin and her daughters would settle near you, that you might assist her in their education ; and I hoped to have brought something of that kind about. But yesterday morning, as I returned from the pump-room, a letter from William was put into my hand, and can you imagine what it told me ? Never, if you were to guess for a hundred years !—Nothing less than that he has sold his plantation, and stock of sugars, coffee, &c., freed all the negroes, (having before prepared them to make a proper use of liberty,) together with their children ! and, finally, that he and his family had *left Jamaica* !

“Did you ever hear of folly equal to all this ? You know that I do not defend the slave-trade ; it is a cruel, brutal business, not fit for Christians, or even men, to carry on ; and I am glad that England is fairly rid of it ; for, if a man uses his negroes well, he may keep up his stock, and even considerably increase it, as I found, to my great profit, under the care of this very man ; for I never knew any one so successful in his treatment of them. But for one who was in lawful possession of such valuable property to fling it away, was acting like a child, or an idiot. I would as soon turn my coach-horses loose upon the downs, and lock the stable-doors, as I would give liberty to those stupid blacks, and they would have as much reason to thank me for it. The indignation which I have felt, and do feel, at this part of my cousin’s conduct, almost chokes me ; my hand shakes so violently that you will hardly be able to read what I write ; and I am the more agitated, because I am not sure that you will not defend what he has done, on the score of what you call justice

and humanity ! But I think a man's first consideration ought to be his own family, which would prevent his throwing away thousands for a mere bubble.

“ Not a wink of sleep could I get last night for thinking of his folly and madness. To give up a concern of such great and certain profit, and come with a large and perhaps increasing family to a country involved in war, loaded with taxes, and where a trader hardly gets up in a morning without a risk of bankruptcy staring him full in the face before night ; and all because his wife was sickly, and he had lost a child by a fever ! He fairly owns that, knowing I would not have agreed to all this, he chose to do it without rather than against my consent ; and the first that I hear of it is, that he and his family are here at Bristol, within ten miles of me. It is well that he did not come nearer—but I would not have seen him. He tells me, (and though I have not yet mentioned it, this is the worst part,) he tells me that he could not, forsooth, have left Jamaica with a quiet conscience if he had dealt otherwise with his slaves ; for though while upon the spot he could look narrowly into the treatment they received, he could not secure humane usage to them under new masters ; and he felt that he had no right so to risk the lives and well being of his fellow men.—Could he have thrown out a more severe reflection upon me ? He must intend it as such, and to countenance him after it would be to own its truth and justice. I well remember when he first came over to the West Indies, he talked much about the cruelty and unlawfulness of enslaving the Africans ; and while I continued with him, he was foolishly particular in attending to their complaints : but they all became so fond of him, that though he begged an additional holiday for them of half a day in a week, the work went on faster than ever it had done before : so I let him have his own way in managing them, without which I believe he would not have staid with me.

“I hoped, however, that as he grew older he would have thought less of other people, and more of himself, particularly when he had a family to provide for. But his self-willed folly has now overleaped all bounds, and he shall pay the forfeit, for not a shilling of mine has he to expect, now or hereafter. He talks of a partnership with his wife’s brother, who is a merchant in Bristol, and of bringing up his children in habits of industry and œconomy. These are fine plans, or rather fine words ; for I have no doubt but he depends upon me, if not for present support, yet to quit the world in a few years, and leave him all that it cost me my health and the labour of half my life to acquire ! But he will find himself mistaken : as he has run counter to all that he knew I should approve, I have done with him, and with his family. Though he is my nearest relation, and the only one remaining of our name, I have renounced him. When I have a little relieved my mind by sending this letter to you, I will write one to him, which will soon be finished, for I have only to say that from the moment he receives it, all connexion between us is at an end ; and that if he attempts to see me, or even to write, he will drive me instantly from Bath, though the waters are at present necessary to my health, which is terribly shaken by the pain which his most ungrateful conduct gives me.

“And now, my dear niece, I feel a little easier ; for I have unburdened my heart to one who I know will feel for my misery, though she may not altogether approve of the resolution I have taken. Do not, however, attempt to alter it, for it would be vain. I will not bestow the gains of a life of care and thriftiness upon one who, to indulge a weak fondness for his family, and perhaps still more, a love of ease which at his time of life is inexcusable, has thrown fortune from his arms ; and, to complete the whole, by his romantic folly, has impoverished his family, and justly forfeited all claim upon my favour by cast-

ing, as far as it was in his power, a cruel reproach upon my character, for not having acted in the same insane manner.

“ Therefore, my beloved niece, let me entreat you not to say a word on his behalf, but promise me that you will come, and more than supply his place in my heart. Come, and be the friend, companion, and nurse, of your husband’s uncle. I will not say that you shall also be his heir, because I know that you are disinterested even to a fault, and would reject my fortune, were I to offer it wholly to your disposal: but come and share with me in all the comforts and advantages which it can bestow, and my gratitude and tenderness shall show the sense I have of the obligations that I owe you. My house, my carriage, my servants, shall be all at your command, and my place of residence wherever you please, so it be far from Bristol. Come, then, to prolong and sweeten the remaining days of your ever affectionate friend and uncle,

THOMAS MANSFIELD.”

The good widow read this letter with equal astonishment and concern. She wondered that Mr. Mansfield should see the conduct of his cousin in so false a light, and cast him from his heart and arms for actions which, to her, made him an object of the warmest love and admiration. The moderation of his wishes with respect to wealth, his affection for his family, and, more than all, his humane and generous consideration for the unfortunate men who had been forced or stolen from their native land, and sold, like beasts of the field, to labour under the whip of their cruel owners, endeared him to her affections, and she could not for a moment hesitate how to act. Going, therefore, to her desk, she sat down and wrote the following answer :

“ My dear Uncle,

“ You did me but justice in believing that I should most sincerely and tenderly grieve for the heavy disap-

pointment which you have lately suffered. It is hard to give up a prospect which the heart has long dwelt upon with pleasure ; and I do feel for the pain and anguish which you have endured, and lament the distressing effects of it upon your health. Most cordially do I thank you for all the kind expressions contained in your too interesting letter. Be assured that every sorrow which you communicate to me, is lodged in the bosom of a sympathizing friend, who would rejoice to send you a comfort in return ;—and who can tell whether a good providence may not give me the delight of consoling your troubled mind ?

“ O that I could induce you to see your cousin’s conduct in the same light that I do ! But, considering the different pursuits and habits of our lives, this could hardly be expected. I am, however, persuaded that before this reaches you, your heart will be softened towards him, and towards his children, who are your natural heirs ; who cannot have offended you, and who I trust will carry your name down to posterity with added honour and credit. How often, dear sir, while I was with you in Shrewsbury, did we differ in opinion even on material subjects ! yet it did not in the least interrupt the friendly regard which I trust will ever subsist between us. And why may it not be so with you and your worthy cousin ? The intention and desire of both is to pursue what will lead to future happiness ; but you disagree as to the probable means. You, with a large part of the world, think that a great fortune ought to be the grand object of a man’s ambition ; and that all but honour and honesty should be given up to forward its attainment. Your cousin, with myself, and many others, would be ready at all times to sacrifice wealth on the altar of virtue or affection. In the slaves, whom he might have sold for a large sum of money, he beheld a number of *fellow-creatures*, each of them as a child of God, and an heir of immortality ; of equal value, in the eye of reason and

religion, with the proudest of their masters. These men, some of whom were, doubtless gifted with talents and dispositions which might have made them shining examples of goodness upon earth, and future bright inhabitants of heaven, were, by the wickedness and cruelty of their fellow men, forcibly reduced to a condition little different from that of the brute animals ; and it remained with him either to leave them to finish their lives in this miserable and degraded state, subject also to the chance of brutal treatment under new masters ; or, by generously relinquishing a right derived from iniquitous and unchristian laws, to raise them again to the station which the Great Creator intended for all his rational offspring,—that of *free*, and therefore *accountable* beings. O sir, I envy your noble cousin the pure delight which must arise from the performance of such an action.

“ I well remember that you told me when at Shrewsbury, that by means of a school which he had established for their education, a *great* part of the negroes on his plantation had been well-instructed ; and that the schoolmaster (a worthy and pious man) was in the constant habit of reading daily prayers to them, and preaching on Sundays,—your cousin and his family regularly attending. This was indeed preparing them for making a right use of the freedom which he no doubt always intended restoring to them. The glorious work is now nearly accomplished, and it will be a delight to him to reflect upon it every succeeding day that he remains on earth ; and when, in the fulness of time, ‘ the Lord shall gather his saints from the four winds, and his redeemed from the ends of the earth,’ will not these men be his ‘ hope, his joy, his crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming ?’ And when he rises to that heaven for which such deeds will fit him, may we not suppose that these his ‘ children in the Lord’ will meet and know him there ? And what will be the feelings of their hearts when, in a pure and glorified

state, they behold him who was the humble instrument of freeing them from the slavish bonds of superstition, and dispersing the dark shades of ignorance which clouded their minds, by bringing them to Christ, the anointed of God, the revealer of his holy will; and enabling them to enlist themselves under the same blessed master with himself; turning them 'from dumb idols, to serve the living God!' changing the most unnatural and unchristian relation in which they before stood, of *master and slave*, into that of equal followers of one Lord, 'brethren in Christ!' 'For there is neither Jew nor Greek,' neither African nor Englishman, 'neither bond nor free; for we are all one in Jesus Christ.'

"O my dear unele! forgive me that, 'from the abundance of my heart' I have thus spoken. Your excellent cousin could not mean to reproach you in what he did: believe me, sir, the real Christian is not hasty in condemning the conduct of his brethren; he looks narrowly to his own actions, but is tender and backward in judging those of another. All I ask is, that you would remove from his heart the heavy weight of your displeasure, give him your affectionate countenance, and leave him (for the present at least) to pursue his plans of business and œconomy. It is not your fortune, but your renewed regard, that I solicit for him: the rest you will perhaps tell me would follow of course; but I feel certain that it is a far inferior object with him.

"Were I to accept your kind and liberal invitation, and were your partial affection for me to carry you so far as to cause you to cut off your natural and most worthy heirs, and endow me with all that you possess, believe me, sir, I would not use a shilling of it, but should hold myself bound by every tie of honour and justice to give it entire to them. I trust, however, that no hand but yours will make your cousin rich. At a distant period of time, after a delightful intercourse of love, fed by paternal bounty on one side,

and tender filial gratitude on the other, may the boon be bestowed on the most deserving of men, by him to whom he already owes so much !

“ As the Bath waters seem likely to be beneficial to you, I hope you will spend the winter there ; and when the fields and groves have again put on their summer livery, I shall look with impatience for your promised visit here ; accompanied perhaps by some of the dear family at Bristol. I may then try to trace a resemblance in face and manner, as there clearly is in mind, between your cousin and my best beloved. He has daughters too,—may not one of them be left with me to educate ? and may she not become another Fanny ?

“ O sir ! my tears flow fast ; the subject becomes more touching, more affecting than I can bear. . . .

“ My mind is weaker than I thought it was, for I have been obliged to lay down my pen for several hours ; and now that I resume it, the same tender feelings return, and nearly overpower me. If there is a healing balm on this side the grave for such wounds as I have received, it is you only who can apply it, and I have told how it must be composed.

“ This is, I fear, a letter of sentiment and feeling more than of argument. I might have said much perhaps that would have better forwarded your cousin's cause : but I am no skilful pleader ; an artless petition warm from the heart is all I have to offer. Throw not such a jewel from you as you are now possessed of in this man's heart, but continue to bind him by the powerful bonds of gratitude ; and that you may rejoice for many years in the comfort and support which it will afford to your declining age, shall be the ardent prayer of your dutiful and affectionate niece,
ISABELLA MANSFIELD.”

The good widow was not at all satisfied with what she had written ; she thought she might have said more and better in a cause which so deeply interest-

ed her : but she feared to add any thing, lest it should diminish the force of what she had already said ; and thinking something might depend upon its reaching her uncle soon, she resolved, such as it was, to send it off without delay.

While Mrs. Mansfield's mind was anxiously employed upon the subject of the letter, she was informed that Thomas, who had called several times before when she had been unable to see him, requested the favour of being admitted. She bade the servant show him into the parlour, and begging he would sit down, addressed him in the following manner :

Lady. I was most happy, my good friend, to hear from your wife that you have so fully performed all that I hoped for and expected from you ; and rejoice to perceive by your improved looks that your health is quite re-established.

Thomas. I have always to thank you, dear madam, for fresh proofs of goodness. God has been pleased to restore my health, and I have good hopes that he will enable me to make a proper use of it.

Lady. You have now had some experience of a Christian life, and tried the strength of your own resolutions of amendment.

Thomas. Many times have I been strongly tempted to fall back, and many hard trials have I had to get the better of myself : but when I earnestly called upon God for help, I always found it ; and by his gracious assistance, I have sometimes so mastered my passions and temper, that no one has perceived the struggle besides myself. When I am sensible of having committed a fault in thought, word, or deed, I bring to mind your excellent advice, and call myself back to the right road. Instead of being disheartened and discouraged, I redouble my diligence ; and have now some hopes that the happy time you told me of is approaching, when thinking and acting

right will become a habit, and I shall seldom feel an inclination to do otherwise.

Lady. Praise God, my friend, praise him for this blessed change; pray that he will renew your strength from day to day, and lead you on to higher and higher degrees of perfection: always aiming at "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," who hath "left us an example that we might follow in his steps."

Thomas. That, dear madam, is what I continually strive to do. I keep him always before my eyes, and by considering what he would have done in my place, I can at all times find out what I ought to do. And since I have done this, I find that the world goes more smoothly with me: I see my family in general content and good-tempered; we have money for all that we really want, and have nearly paid our debts. When that is done, if the Lord continues to prosper me, I see that I shall be able to save something, which I will most thankfully put into your hands. I have also formed a scheme for being useful to some of my neighbours in the course of the winter which is coming on. The widow James has two sons, who are sober and industrious youths; but getting good wages, and having no one to control them, they are in danger of being drawn in to go to public houses, and get idle and vicious habits: so I have proposed to them, that as the evenings will soon shut in early, they should come to my house after work, to read and write for an hour or two.—My kitchen is always clean and comfortable; and as they are to bring candles, we can afford to make a good fire when the weather becomes cold. You, dear madam, have added to your other goodness the present of a Bible with so fine a print, that I think I shall be able to read in it if I live to fourscore; and by my advice each of the boys has purchased one of the same value; and after next week our meetings are to begin. I am but a poor scribe; but as

neither of them knows any thing of writing, I will do my best to teach them.

Lady. I very highly approve of your plan, and shall perhaps be able to give you some assistance with respect to writing and accounts, both of which it is most desirable that every young man should learn. What you are going to do, my friend, may be of material benefit to your pupils, in implanting good principles in their minds, and forming habits which may go with them through life ; and if there are any other young men in the village who wish to join you, I hope you will not refuse to admit them.

Thomas. I have already thought of several to whom it might be useful, but I will begin with these ; and when we are got into the way of it, I can take in others by degrees. One rule I am resolved to make, which is, that no one who comes to our little meeting shall ever enter a public house.

Lady. And I will add another, if you will give me leave,—let no one be absent from a place of public worship on Sundays, without giving some good reason for it.

Thomas. I thank you, madam, for this hint, and will make it a condition of being admitted amongst us. How do I praise God for having put into my mind such a means of doing good, as I hope this will be ! Never can I sufficiently bless him for the change which through your persuasions he has wrought in my heart, which I feel to be greater and greater every day. A prospect of being useful to my fellow-creatures, is now more delightful to me than any view of worldly gain or advantage to myself. Indeed I make less and less account of any benefit that does not stretch forward to the happy land which lies beyond the grave. O madam ! you have filled my mind with hopes which raise me above all cares of the present time, but such as, I trust, will help me on towards that heavenly country.

Lady. My heart rejoices to hear you utter words

so worthy of a Christian ; to know that they spring from an honest and sincere mind, and are accompanied by a daily succession of good deeds. Who would have thought three months ago, when you were living with few or no thoughts of God and another world, and in so many miserable and sinful habits ; with no bright hopes to cheer you in sickness or misfortune, and few kind actions even towards your own family to look back upon ;—who would then have thought of the happy change that has now taken place in your mind and conduct ; which enables you not only to give comfort and frugal plenty to your own household, but to stretch out your hands to those around you, and guide them into the heavenly way ! How plain a proof are you to yourself and others, that a man may do much good, without being either rich or learned ! Nothing but active piety is wanting to make the poorest man a faithful servant of Christ, and a humble helper with him, in working out the salvation of mankind. Go on then, my excellent friend, “ continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel.” “ Walk worthy of God, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

The good widow was so much moved that tears of pleasure filled her eyes : and Thomas, with a heart overflowing with gratitude to her, and piety to God ; soon after took his leave.

In the course of a few days another letter from Bath arrived, which Mrs. Mansfield opened with trembling hands, and read as follows :

“ Dear Madam,

“ I was far from expecting such a letter as I have received. If you had been hired to plead at the bar for my cousin, you could not more decidedly have taken his part. You say that we used to differ while at Shrewsbury : but we never spoke on any

point which affected me so nearly, nor did you ever go to such extremes in your opposition to me. It is well that you did not come here according to my request ; for I could not have endured to hear one who has acted so foolish, so thriftless, and so ungrateful a part, praised and exalted into something more than man. You cannot, I know, think William Mansfield such an angel of light, without disliking and despising me ; so I must give up all thought of the visit to you next summer, to which I looked forward with so much pleasure. I know that you are a good woman, and I shall never forget the obligations which you would not permit me to return ; nor will I forfeit the promise I made at parting, with respect to my employment of the seventh day. But our feelings are so opposite upon a point in which I can never change, that I think we have met for the last time. I inclose a note for thirty pounds, to be divided as you please among your poor neighbours ; they shall be no losers by the alteration in our plans. I shall soon leave Bath ; and when I am settled in another residence, you shall again hear from,

“ Dear madam,

“ Your obliged friend,

“ THOMAS MANSFIELD.”

This letter was more harsh and positive than the widow's worst fears had led her to expect, and it shocked her very much. She blamed herself for having written with such warmth, and wished she had suppressed her feelings, and said only a part of what she thought. This might have been more prudent ; but it was so contrary to the simple and ingenuous sincerity to which she was continually prompted by her open heart, and which had indeed been a habit of her life, that she could not convince herself of the entire rectitude of so doing. Yet she was distressed to think that, in her generous eagerness to do good, she might have added to the irrita-

tion of her uncle's mind, and increased the evil she was so anxious to remove. It was, however, useless to grieve for what could not be recalled; and committing the cause of the excellent William Mansfield to the care of Him who could best appreciate his conduct, her mind became more easy, and she began to consider how she might best dispose of her uncle's bounty; resolving to put down exactly the manner in which it was employed, and send the account in the first letter that she had an opportunity of writing to him; for she looked upon herself as forbidden to do so till she heard from him again.

The first deserving object who occurred to her was a boy of a mild and amiable character, who had been lame from his infancy, was the son of an honest labourer who had many other children, and had been kept at school by her for the last two years. He was now of an age to be apprenticed, and she had spoken of him to a respectable shoemaker in the village, who had offered to take him for ten pounds, and a small sum in addition to fit him out. Another of her neighbours, who had brought up a large family without asking for assistance from the parish, was just recovering from a dangerous illness; and she knew the doctor's bill was a heavy one, and must keep him a long time in poverty before he would be able to discharge it. He had owed this to her, and also that he had nearly gone to the last shilling of all that he had laid by before this sickness came. Things would not perhaps have gone so badly with him, had the worthy widow been at home: the simple medicines which she would have ordered in the beginning of his complaint, might have checked its violence, and the nourishing food with which he would have been supplied, have given him more strength to contend with it: and as her absence was occasioned by her attendance upon Mr. Mansfield, she thought this case had a peculiar claim upon his liberality; and accordingly, after paying the bill, she gave him

enough to discharge the half year's rent of his cottage and garden, which was nearly due. The remainder of the money she resolved to lay out in small presents during the ensuing winter among various old and sickly persons, who had little, except a parish allowance, to subsist upon. To several of these she allowed a shilling a week, which in common times had enabled them to live in tolerable comfort: but she foresaw that the approaching season would be trying to the poor, on account of the high price of provisions; and was glad to add something to what she usually put by for sugar, coffee, oatmeal, and other similar things, which she often sent in small quantities to the helpless and the old.

The delight which dispensing benefits among her fellow creatures always gave her, caused a warm glow of affection in her breast towards him who had at this time enlarged her power of doing so. "My dear uncle," said she, "why are you not here to receive my thanks, and those of the worthy hearts whom you have cheered? To the poor lame boy you have, with the blessing of God, given a provision for life; nay, many a little fortune has, with the help of honest industry, been raised from no higher a beginning: and to the recovering man you have restored that ease of mind which is so necessary to health, and to enable him again to resume those virtuous labours by which his family is supported. And besides these great matters, I have enough left to gladden the heart of age and poverty many times in the course of the dreary months which lie before them. All this, my uncle, you have done, for little more than one splendid entertainment would have cost you, by which, so far from any being really benefited, scarce one perhaps would have been made happy, even during the few short hours it lasted."

A few weeks after this time, David Williams coming to work in Mrs. Mansfield's garden, she resolved to take the opportunity of having a little conversa-

tion with him ; and after giving some direction about his work, she thus addressed him :

Lady. I think, David, you are particularly happy in having so fine a family of children, and so sensible and good a woman for your wife.

David. The children are sharp enough, and all pretty healthy, considering the hardness of the times ; and as for Sarah, I make no complaints of her.

Lady. You say too little, in merely saying that. I love your wife for her piety and gentleness, and I respect her for being a good mother, a good wife, and a good manager of her family.

David. Why, as to all that, madam, you are a better judge than I ; but, as I said before, I make no complaints of *her*, whatever she does of me.

Lady. You best know whether you give her occasion for any. If you are a kind husband, and carry your wages home to be spent in your family, sharing all that you have with them, as an affectionate parent delights to do, I am sure she will rejoice to praise you.

David. I want none of her praises : a man is not to ask his wife how he is to spend his wages, I suppose ; and if she has desired you to talk to me, and take me to task, I can tell her she will get very little by it. I am not such a child as to want schooling at this time of day.

Lady. I assure you she never desired any thing of the kind, or had the least knowledge that I intended it. But you cannot surely be offended with me for wishing you to be better and happier than you are. I have given advice to many, which, though they did not like it at the time, they have afterwards thanked me for ; and should rejoice to be of service both to you and to your wife, if you would give me leave.

David. I don't know what Sarah has been telling you, madam, but I believe we live together as well as most other working-people do. To be sure, I spend a little money at the Green : but how can I help

it? I am not so young by eighteen good years as she is, and cannot take to drinking water at my time of life.

Lady. I do not even wish that you should ; but the regular quantity of liquor which is supplied by those who employ you, ought to be all you take.

David. I cannot do without a little more : if my wife starves me, I wonder who is to maintain her and the children.

Lady. Let me again assure you, that this is a friendly debate between you and me ; your wife neither does nor will know any thing of the matter.

David. Well, madam, I have told you the truth ; I cannot do without something more than is to be had at home ; and I had better go on as I do, than die and leave my family for the parish, to provide for.

Lady. You have a very false notion of what will do you good, and prolong your life. A comfortable supper at your own house, such as your wife could afford to provide if you carried all your wages home, would strengthen you more than all that the cellar of a public house contains. The strongest constitutions are destroyed by regularly drinking a good deal, even without ever drinking to excess : but if you go the length of brutal intoxication, I need not tell you that you are inviting loathsome diseases, and an early death ; committing a great sin in the sight of God, and making yourself a hateful, senseless wretch in the eyes of your fellow creatures.

David. I never did say, and I do not pretend to say, that drunkenness is a good thing ; but I know by myself, that wholesome sound liquor gives strength ; indeed there is no working without it.

Lady. I have lately heard a circumstance which makes me believe just the contrary. A number of men in one of the King's dock-yards laid a wager on a matter that had been disputed among them, Whether, having as much food, and of whatever kind he pleased, a man drinking water would not

hold out to work longer than one who with the same food drank porter. The trial was made, not by two men, but by six or eight men on each side: their work was sawing timber, and the quantity they undertook to do each day, very great. They both chose beef-steaks, as the most nourishing food; and after a contest of many days, the porter-drinkers gave up, while they who drank nothing but water were still fresh and able to go on.

David. And is this matter really true?

Lady. I was told it by a person upon whom I can depend: and I hope it will convince you, that drinking even what are called wholesome liquors, rather lessens than adds to the strength of a man who has plenty to eat; and upon a weak and empty stomach its effects must be much worse.

David. I wonder very much that it should be as you say. But even if it is, I cannot afford to live upon beef-steaks. Indeed we seldom get a bit of fresh meat in our house; and our pig was a poor little thing this year, because the potatoes were scarce and dear.

Lady. Think then how hardly your wife and little ones must have fared, and how cruel it is in you, to spend upon what in reality does you much harm, that money which would bring plenty and comfort to you all! Come, promise me that you will think seriously of what I have said, and to-morrow we will talk of it again.

David. I can think of it, to be sure. Indeed, I cannot help thinking of the men and their wager: that those who drank nothing but water, should out-work the others, was a thing one never could have expected. If I was to tell this at the Green, Robin would get into a passion, and hardly a soul would believe it.

Lady. I wish I could persuade you never to go to the Green again, but to take delight in your own family and your own comfortable fire-side.

David. Lörd, madam, nobody would know me, and I should hardly know myself, if I left off going to the Green. Man and boy, I believe I may say, that barring sickness, I have hardly been a week away from it in the last forty years. I have seen three generations of landlords, and I think I shall outlive the fourth : for though poor Robin is but young, he is falling fast into a dropsy. He takes too much of his mother's good ale ; though I know it is not that, so much as the rum and gin, that kills him.

Mrs. Mansfield was so much shocked and disgusted with the unfeeling hardness and insensibility of David Williams, that she was tempted to leave him without saying another word. But compassion for poor Sarah, whose condition she now more than ever pitied, and fears for his own wretched prospect, as a human being going blindly on in the "broad way which leadeth to destruction," made her resolve to add something more.

Lady. Will you allow me to say a few words to you upon the most weighty of all subjects ? Have you well considered whether the life you now lead is such as you can justify to your own heart, such as will promote your everlasting welfare ? Are you making a wise preparation for the solemn day of account, towards which every mortal man is rapidly advancing, for that call to another world, which may surprise you among your companions at the Green, and even in a state of brutal intoxication ? Have you well considered this ? and can you run so fearful a risk ?

David. I cannot say that I have thought much about it. There is no occasion for thinking of what one cannot prevent. Every body must die once ; but I am not so old, or sickly, as to be looking for it just yet.

Lady. Ah David ! I have had many warnings to look for early death. My beloved husband, as you well know, was taken from me when little more than half your age, and my darling child when still much

younger. But I do not repine: my heart rejoices in the certainty that they were ready for the call. Prepared like well ripened corn for the sickle, they were cut down, and are now stored up for the great day of recompense which is promised by our Almighty Father, when "he shall send Jesus Christ, who hath already been preached unto us, whom the heavens must receive till the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."

David. I do not pretend to understand these high things.

Lady. That, my friend, is your own fault. All that is necessary to salvation, God has mercifully placed within the reach of every one. The Gospel of Christ was preached more especially to the poor, and all our material duties are so plainly pointed out, that "he who runs may read."

David. I have heard many sermons in my time, and many people talk about religion; but for the most part I think it is too learned for a poor working man who was never taught to read.

Lady. Do you think you should be a better man, that is, *more obedient to the laws of God*, if you understood them better?

David. Why, I hardly know whether I should or not; for I see rich men, who must know all about it, quite as bad as we poor ones can be. I never swore so many oaths in a week, as I heard farmer Jones do but yesterday; and I know a certain person who uses false weights, and grinds down horse-beans and many other things to mix with the flour in his mill, charging all at the price of the very best wheat. Yet these men have bibles in their houses, and go to church or chapel on Sundays, pretending to be religious people!

Lady. I am sorry to own that what you say is too true: some even of those who must be fully acquainted with their duty, fail miserably in the performance of it: there are many, I fear, who kneel

down in places of worship, without lifting up their hearts to God, and have bibles in their houses without reading their precious contents. But let us at present leave these unhappy men to settle this great concern for themselves, and look narrowly into our own account. Do you, as far as your knowledge reaches, act a christian part?

David. Why really, madam, I hardly know what you call a christian part. I believe I am nobody's enemy but my own : I do no one any harm, and what more can be expected from one like me?

Lady. I will tell you, my friend, what is expected and required from you, what you are fully able to perform, and what if you do your utmost to perform, your life in this world will be full of hope and comfort, and after death you will be received into a state of joy and blessedness, which will never end. Is not this worth striving for? Is it not a glorious prize?

David. To be sure it will be a fine thing for those that can deserve it.

Lady. None of us, not even the best, can *deserve* it. But God is so *infinitely good and kind*, that he offers it freely to all those who serve him in love and sincerity of heart ; to all "who diligently seek him ;" to all who so believe in his Son as to "live soberly, righteously, and godly," during their short time of trial in this world : and can you have the heart to refuse so noble, so bountiful an offer?

David. Why, I should not wish to refuse it, to be sure, but—

Lady. Come, promise me that from this time you will begin a new life.—Try it but for one week : do not go to the Green for one week, but take all the money that you get, home to your wife. All that I now ask of you is to promise me this.

David. Why, to be sure, to oblige you, madam, I should not greatly value such a thing as a week : but, as I told you before, my landlord is poorly, and

I know, as many customers have fallen off in these hard times, will take it ill if I forsake him just now. Besides, I owe him a little money, which, if he thinks I am gone to the Bear, perhaps he will trouble me about : so you see at present I cannot just do what I wish : and besides that, when people are getting in years, it cannot be expected that they should alter their ways.

Lady. Unhappy man ! will you not be persuaded to flee from the wretched fate of those who reject the offered bounty of their God ? Do you not tremble while I repeat the words of an apostle, " Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, will be upon every soul of man who doeth evil ? "

David. I should tremble, madam, if I was a robber, or a murderer ; but, as I said before, I hurt nobody but myself, and the best of us are not without faults.

Lady. True, the best of us have faults. Only *one* has lived in this world entirely free from sin. But every real Christian steadily *aims* at doing so : and according to our success, according to the measure of real goodness that we attain, will be our reward in the eternal state : and so, with respect to the ungodly, the different degrees of guilt will each receive its due punishment from the Great Searcher of hearts. You have happily escaped the enormous guilt of murder, and the shameful crime of robbery : but are we not expressly told, that no drunkard shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ? and are there not threatenings that point fearfully to him who wastes the substance that should feed his wife and little ones ? Think of the solemn words of Paul, he to whom the word of life was communicated by Christ himself in his glorified state, after he had ascended into heaven : " If any provide not for his own," says this great apostle, " and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is *worse than an infidel.* "

Does not this clearly tell you that by such actions you renounce your Lord, and forfeit all title to the name and the hopes of a Christian ?

David. Perhaps it might have been well if I had heard all this long ago, but now I beg you to say no more about it. I do no more than many others, and, as I said before, at my time of life it is hard to change.

Lady. Well, David, for the present I will say no more, than begging you to remember, that whether we prepare for it or not, a day of solemn reckoning will come, when you and I must be judged according to our works. I entreat you then to think seriously of all that I have said, knowing that I can have no other view or wish but to bring you to a just sense of your present most dangerous and sinful state ; that while life is yet lent, you may by true repentance of the past, and turning from your evil ways, “ flee from the wrath to come ;” and, for the remainder of your days, “ walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his heavenly kingdom.”

The worthy widow stood silent for a minute ; but David returning no answer, she retired into the house, disappointed and grieved at the apparent ill success of her attempt to soften the hard heart and enlighten the darkened understanding of this man. She lamented that any human being should be so lost to every good and generous feeling, so destitute of gratitude to God, or love to man, as he appeared to be ; and deeply regretted that the pious and gentle Sarah should be united to such an one.

There are few things more to be deplored than that young women should rashly marry men with whose principles and characters they are little acquainted, and even that little which they do know, perhaps not to their advantage ; unaware of the degree of danger and misery which they are too probably bringing upon themselves. The most fearful part of the risk

is, that they may by degrees become reconciled to, and corrupted by, the vices of their husbands. This is complete ruin, in the worst sense of the word; ruin *here* and *hereafter*. But if fortunately this should not be the case,—should the wife, like Sarah Williams, afterwards improve in piety and goodness, and be, as is too likely, unable to reform her husband, what a severe affliction must it be to her to have for a constant companion a low-minded, hard-hearted, profligate, or dishonest man!—to see the father of her children not only setting them an example which it would pierce her soul to see them follow, but doing his utmost to prevent and destroy the influence of her good precepts upon their tender hearts!

Greatly did the benevolent Mrs. Mansfield lament that the early imprudence of Sarah should have brought so hard a trial upon her: but a bad marriage is an evil which, with respect to this world, has no cure; and she kindly resolved to lose no opportunity of assisting her so to strengthen her mind, that she might patiently endure what could not be remedied. "Trust in God, and full confidence in his gracious promises," said she, "will support her;" and it shall be my part frequently to bring to her mind the short duration of the present life, and the never-ending happiness of the next; and that "our light afflictions, which are but for a moment," will work for the patient continuer in well-doing "a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory!"

VILLAGE DIALOGUES.

PART VI.

MRS. MANSFIELD'S time passed smoothly on for several weeks, in its usual active yet peaceful course, of friendship and kindness towards her neighbours, and heartfelt piety to God. The former was the business, and the latter the delight, the refreshment, and the support of her life. She often found satisfaction and enjoyment in intercourse with her fellow creatures, and more especially when it appeared that she had done them good : but she was sometimes hurt and disappointed by being unable to turn the sinner from the evil of his ways, the vain from his vanity, the proud from his arrogance, and the worldly-minded from his short-sighted selfishness. But in her hours of meditation and prayer, all was sweet and consoling to her mind. In every sorrow and disappointment, she found a certain relief in opening her heart to God ! in laying down her cares at the footstool of his throne, and meekly yielding up her will to his. If a tear of regret for those dear ones from whom she was for a time separated, would sometimes rise in her eye, or roll down her cheek, she would soon check the soft emotion, by recollecting that she was an heir of *immortality* ! And all sorrow for present privations, was swallowed up by the glorious prospect which *endless ages of felicity* presented to her view. Not in her own righteousness did she trust, for she was " meek and lowly of heart," and deeply sensible that towards God, after the utmost that we can do, still we must remain, " unprofitable servants," the best of us not doing all that it is our duty to do : but her firm confidence was in that mercy which hath promised salvation to the upright in heart ; to those " who are

risen with Christ, and seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God!"

Hour after hour would glide on, while with the sacred volume open before her, she would dwell on its contents with unalloyed delight, her heart overflowing with gratitude to Him who by the trials which he was pleased to allot for her in this short life, afforded the means of fitting her for his everlasting kingdom: and when she closed the book, and returned to occupy herself with the common affairs of the world, it was always with renewed strength, and resolutions of making all that happens on its changeful scene, subservient to that glorious purpose.

It has before been mentioned, that this excellent woman kept up a friendly intercourse with all her neighbours of whatever rank; believing that as "brethren in Christ," she was bound, as far as her power extended, to be useful to them all. To the poor she was gentle and compassionate, enlightening their minds, as well as relieving their necessities, and to the classes above these, who are in general totally neglected, and sometimes scarcely treated as fellow creatures, by the rich and well informed; she was uniformly attentive, inviting them occasionally to her house, and conversing freely with them on all subjects on which she thought she could be useful to them in removing their prejudices, and putting things of consequence to the regulation of their heart and conduct, in a just light before their eyes. She did not do this (as the reader may observe in her dialogue with Mrs. Bennet) in a haughty dictatorial manner, as if she sent for them to be taught and schooled; but she drew forth their opinions, and where she thought them wrong, mildly endeavoured to set them right. This practice of associating in turns with all ranks to promote their improvement in piety and virtue, it may well be sup-

posed she copied from her beloved husband, who was a true shepherd of the flock which was committed to his care. During his life she was his zealous helper in promoting christian faith and morals among them, and when he was gone, she felt herself still called upon to leave nothing undone in her little circle, which God had given her talents and opportunity to perform.

One morning, on her return from a number of visits, in every one of which she had administered relief, comfort, or useful counsel, she was met at her own door by Sarah, and, delighted to perceive an unusual degree of cheerfulness in her countenance, desired her to come in ; and when they were seated, " Something, I am sure, has happened that pleases you, my dear Sarah," said she, " and I shall be glad to share in your satisfaction, of whatever kind it may be."

Sarah. O madam, I have indeed good news to tell you. But it is quite a little history, and if you can spare time to hear me, I will begin from the first.

Lady. Begin then, for I shall rejoice to hear of whatever gives you comfort.

Sarah. I believe I told you, madam, some time ago that Mrs. Bennet was in poor health, which gave me an opportunity of often being useful to her, so that we were quite upon civil terms, though she was too proud to ask me to sit down and talk with her as you, though a lady, so often do. But what I came on purpose to tell you is, that last Sunday night, after we had said our prayers, and I had put my children in bed, as I was sitting alone by the kitchen fire, thinking of the sermon and chapters which I had heard in the day, I was surprised to hear a horse come upon a full trot up to my neighbour's house, and stop there without the door being opened, or the sound of any person dismounting. I went out, and the moon shining bright, saw a little hack-

ny which I knew was commonly rode by the servants at the squire's, standing with a side saddle on his back before Mrs. Bennet's door. I called to know if any body was there, but no one answered. I then went to the door, which was locked, and looking in at the kitchen window saw that it was empty, and the fire made up close. I knew that Mr. Bennet had gone out in the morning to visit a brother at some distance, and was not expected back for a day or two; and after considering a little, I thought it was very likely that Mrs. Bennet who often visits the housekeeper at the hall, might have borrowed this little horse to carry her home, and from his coming to her door without a rider, I feared something had happened. The thoughts of this made me tremble from head to foot, and I stood some minutes considering what was best to be done. What would I then have given that my husband had been at home, and sober, that we might have gone together towards the squire's! But I could not think of going almost a mile to the Green in search of him, as in the meantime the poor woman might be lost. So, coward as I am, I resolved to go by myself in search of her; and running up stairs for my bonnet, just looked at the children, who were all fast asleep, and offered up a prayer to God, that he would guard and protect both them and me; for I was so alarmed, that the danger then appeared much greater than it really was.

Just as I was setting out, I recollected the bottle of hartshorn which you, dear madam, gave me for my Sally's sore throat, and put it into my pocket. The rain which had fallen in the morning had made the road very wet and slippery, and as I walked along, trembling, and almost faint, the moon was covered with a dark cloud, and a heavy shower wetted me to the skin. I now wished that I had mounted the pony, as it was full three miles to the squire's, and I was resolved to go the whole way, if

I did not find her on the road: but this did not come into my mind till I was a good way from home, and I could not think of turning back. So on I went, looking fearfully about, and dreading the condition in which I might find the object of my search; till just as we turn from our long lane into the great road, the moon happening to shine upon the very spot, I saw a woman lying on the ground without sense or motion.

O madam, I flew to her, and you may conceive my joy when I found that she was alive, though at that time quite insensible. My recollection and spirits seemed to return to me in a moment, and sitting down by her, I raised her head to my bosom, and rubbed hartshorn on her nostrils and temples. While I was doing this she had several convulsive struggles, and her breath at length returned, but it was some time before she was able to speak, though she many times attempted it. As soon as I thought she could understand me, I told her how I had been alarmed, and in consequence came out to look for her: she feebly thanked me, and asked how we should possibly get home. I dreaded to see her attempt to rise, lest I should find that some bone was broken or out of joint; but thank God, it was not so, and she was able after a while to stand, and then supported by me to move slowly forward, complaining heavily of a bruise on her left arm and side.—Many times were we obliged to stop and rest upon the wet ground, for though I am so much stronger and taller than she, I found myself quite unable to carry her, which I more than once attempted to do.

At length however we reached home, when to add to our difficulties the key of Mrs. Bennet's house was missing; so I could only take her into mine, and resolve to do all that was in my small power to help her, and putting her into David's arm chair, I stirred up the fire, and put on plenty of water to heat. I then fetched down linen to air, and the most

comfortable clothes I had, for the poor woman was almost covered with mud, and quite wet through. When the water was ready, I helped her to wash her face, hands, and feet, which seemed greatly to refresh her, and then she put on dry clothes : after this was done, I grieved to think that I had nothing in the house nice enough for her to eat, but she was so kind as to say that she liked a fresh egg as well as any thing, and I lost no time in getting one for her. She now began again to complain of the pain in her arm and side, and I rejoiced to know that I had succotrine aloes in the house, which I pounded, and mixing with warm water, rubbed it gently for a long time over every part that was affected. By the time this was done the linen was aired, and calling up my little Sally who was sleeping with the infant, I laid it on my own bed, and putting Mrs. Bennet into it, had soon after the pleasure of hearing her say, that she lay quite at ease, and comfortable. I then sent Sally, to the other children, and after feeding the young one and laying it in the cradle, got some dry clothes and supper for myself, and prepared for spending the night in the arm-chair, having desired Mrs. Bennet to knock if she was unwell, or wanted any thing.

O madam, with what delight, and gratitude to God, did I look back upon the business of the evening. He had given me an opportunity of serving Him in the manner that he chiefly requires, by being a comfort to, and perhaps saving the life of a fellow creature. He had protected my sleeping innocents in their lonely cottage, and me, while with a trembling heart I wandered forth alone, in a dismal night ; and after directing me to the object of my search, had given me the power of supplying all her immediate wants. I could not sleep for thinking of all these things, but I spent a happy night, in prayer and thankfulness, and could not for once forbear rejoicing that David did not come home, for in the

state that he no doubt was in, it would have been most distressing to me, particularly as no bed was left for him.

Before it was quite light in the morning, Mrs. Bennet called me to her, and after saying that she had slept well, and was in all respects much better than she expected to be, desired I would go to the place where she had fallen from her horse, to look for the key of her house, which she thought must have been dropped there : so as soon as I had dressed the children I set out, and found it exactly on the spot where she had lain. I ran back with it, and Mrs. Bennet begged me, as soon as I had milked her poor cows, which I grieved to think had been forgotten the night before, to go and light a fire in her kitchen, and bring her some clothes which she directed me where to find. When all this was done, she got up, and to my great joy, found herself surprisingly well. When she came down stairs, "Sarah," said she, "I will not leave your house till you tell me what I am in your debt for all the care and trouble I have given you. Do not be afraid of naming a good round sum, for I owe you a great deal." "You owe me nothing, dear Mrs. Bennet," said I, "I bless God, for giving me the power to help you, and you are freely welcome to all that I can do, both now, and at any other time when you may want me." She said nothing in reply to this, but after being silent for several minutes, asked me to rub her side and arm once more with the aloes and water. When this was done, "I begin to want my breakfast," said she, "lend me your arm, for I hardly know whether I can yet walk home without it;" and indeed she was quite giddy after going a few steps, and was very glad to be seated by the side of her own fire. I had before put on the tea kettle, and left every thing clean and comfortable, but as she was so very weak, I stayed to get her breakfast ready; and will own to you, dear madam, that I thought

she would have asked me to sit down and partake with her, which would have been a little treat, as she always has the best of every thing; but she did not, and I thought to myself, it is her way, and why should I look for any other. So I told her I would go and do my work, and come to her at milking time in the evening. "I shall want you before," said she, "do come as soon as you have an hour to spare after dinner." I promised that I would, and left her.

Just as I had got my house into a little order, my husband came home, in a very bad humour, as he always does after spending such nights. I will however say nothing of his behaviour, as it would shock you, without relieving me, but hasten to tell you, that after we had dined, and he was gone out, I hushed my infant to sleep, and leaving the rest of my children at play before the door, went in as I had promised to Mrs. Bennet.

"Sit down Sarah," said she, "I want to have some conversation with you." I did as she desired, and she thus went on. "It is not any thing which I can say, that will let you know the sense I have of your goodness towards me, but my future *conduct* shall show it. From this time I have done with the foolish and sinful pride which made me look down upon one who is a thousand times better and worthier than myself. At the time when I recovered my senses, and found you seated on the wet ground supporting me in your arms, I would have thanked you, but I could not speak; and when with such labour and difficulty you brought me under your own roof, and acted towards me who so ill deserved it at your hands, in all respects as a tender and dutiful daughter would have done to the best of mothers, I was astonished, and thought you could only do it with the hope of a large reward, which indeed you had well deserved: but when with so much real kindness, you told me, I was freely welcome, and offered to

do as much again if ever it should be wanting, without an eye to fee or reward—you overcame me, and completely gained my heart. You heaped those “coals of fire” upon my head, which have melted down my pride, and made you from that moment my adopted daughter. At the time, I could not say this to you, and after you brought me home my mind was full, and I wanted leisure to think ; so I bade you come to me after dinner, and in the mean time I have settled how every thing shall be. I will take your eldest girl entirely to live with me : she shall continue to go to school for a year or two to come, and I will instruct her in all that is wanting to fit her for a good service, which when she is of a proper age I can easily get for her, and when she leaves me another shall come, and so on.” O madam, how do you think I felt when I heard all this !

Lady. Dear Sarah, your little story fills my eyes with tears, and my heart with gladness.

Sarah. And this is only a part of my happiness. She told me that now she was getting into years, and her health but weak, she was resolved no longer to work so hard as she had done. “If I and my husband,” said she, “were never to gain another shilling, we have enough to maintain us in plenty all our lives. He has long wanted me to live in ease and quiet, so with God’s blessing, I will spend the rest of my days in comfort, and in doing good. That dear lady who is so much your friend, said what a help you might be to me, and now, unworthy as I am, I have fully proved it. You shall milk and churn for me till your daughter is able, and I will pay you with plenty of milk and fruit, and garden stuff for your family. Go no more for water to any well but mine, and for any thing that is wanting for you or yours, come to me as to a mother. I have no near relation but a sister who is older than myself, and well provided for, and my husband and I have so settled it, that each of us shall dispose of half what

we are worth; so I will directly make my will, that you may not lose your support, even if I should die."

I laid my hand upon her mouth, begging her to stop, and not talk of such great things, till she better saw how I should deserve it; but she would not be stopped, and from that time she *has been* like a mother to me and mine.

Lady. Though it does not always happen, yet frequently our gracious Father thus makes virtue to prosper upon earth: and when we have overcome evil with good, and prosperity is as with you, the effect of truly Christian conduct; the delight which arises from it is a hundred fold; for we have not only obtained a present advantage, but brightened the prospect of endless felicity, which will be the portion of the righteous in a better world.

Sarah. O-madam, all this happiness and comfort do I under God, owe to you; for by your means was my heart converted from worldly pursuits, and turned to my duty and to heaven. I have often and earnestly prayed for grace to enable me patiently to submit to the poverty, to which my husband's ill conduct seemed, without hope of remedy, to condemn me and my children; but now *that* evil is graciously removed, and every thing is happy about me, but his temper and habits. Do not however think that I am so ungrateful to heaven and you as to be discontented, or to complain of those.

Lady. In this world, my good Sarah, *perfect happiness* neither is, nor ought to be found. She is an inhabitant of those brighter regions towards which a pious heart continually aspires; and only her likeness or shadow shews itself here to our admiring eyes, to encourage and stimulate our desires and efforts to obtain her. Yet mixed as the present life is with pleasure and pain, good and evil, too many of us are disposed to take up our rest here, and act as if we were citizens and inhabitants of the earth, instead

of "strangers and pilgrims," passing through it; and seeking a better, even a heavenly country. Go on then, diligently endeavouring to follow the precepts and example of your Lord; patiently and submissively enduring the evil, and praising the bountiful Bestower for the good; till in his own appointed time, he calls the faithful and obedient followers of his Son, to inherit with him, the kingdom prepared by his infinite goodness for their "exceeding great reward!"

At this moment Mrs. Mansfield's servant entered, to inform her that a poor woman, the mother of a large family, had been ill for some days, and that her sister, who was come from some distance to nurse her, earnestly requested her immediate help. Ever ready to obey the calls of benevolence, the good widow took a hasty leave of Sarah, and instantly set out towards the cottage of the sick woman.

The morning was warm and misty, and the paths wet, which, as her feelings led her to walk fast, heated and fatigued her very much. Immediately on her arrival she went up into the close chamber of the patient, (into which a fire had most injudiciously been put, notwithstanding the warmth of the weather, and the burning fever she was in,) and was beginning to ask some questions respecting her disorder, and the reason why she had not been earlier informed of it, when a sudden faintness came over her, her eyes grew dim, her head giddy, and she sunk down upon the bed, beside which she had been imprudently standing.

The poor sick woman was insensible to all that passed, being at that time in a state of delirium, but her sister had sufficient presence of mind instantly to open the window of the room, and send one of the children for a cup of fresh water, with which she sprinkled the lady's face: in a short time she began to revive, and by degrees recovered her recollection, but was seized with a violent shivering and sickness.

Nothing proper for her relief was to be had in this poor cottage, but she was far less alarmed than those about her, and desired her servant might be sent for, and told to bring certain drops with her. Ill as she really was, her thoughts turned again to the poor object who lay before her, and having made a few inquiries, she directed that the fire should be immediately removed, and the door of the room kept constantly open. "You have seen," said she, "the effect which the bad air has had upon me, and how can it be fit for a sick person to breathe. When the weather is dry and mild, let the window be kept always open; and when this cannot be done, be careful not to shut the door, day or night.

Being fully convinced that the poor woman's complaint was a low fever, she inquired whether they could procure some fresh yeast, and being told that there was some then in the house, ready for making bread, she bade the woman go to a neighbouring public house for some beer, and when it was come directed a large spoonful of the yeast to be given in a tea cup full of it; and this to be repeated every four hours, till they heard further from her.

Mrs. Mansfield now perceived the sickness beginning to return, and going with some difficulty down the steep and narrow stairs, sat down in the kitchen, where she found immediate relief from the fresh air which came in from the open door. She had not sat long before Hannah her faithful servant entered, full of anxiety and almost breathless with haste. She brought drops, wine, and biscuits, from a store which her mistress always left under her care, for the benefit of any poor people who might be in want of such things while she was absent from home. One of the biscuits she was prevailed upon to eat, dipped in a glass of ginger wine, and it appeared considerably to revive her; the remainder she left for the use of the sick woman, strictly cautioning her sister not to let her have much wine at a time,

and promising soon to send some strong mutton broth, of which she might give her a tea cup full as often as she could take it.

She now thought herself so much better as to be able to walk home, and leaning on her servant's arm, she at length, greatly fatigued and exhausted, reached her own habitation.

"Ah madam," said Hannah, when she had seated her upon a sofa, "you did very rashly to go out again to day without taking both rest and refreshment, especially to visit a person who had a fever. You used always to eat something just before you went to such complaints, and to take a bit of camphor to put into your mouth when you went into the sick room."

Lady. True, my good Hannah, those were precautions which your dear master insisted upon my using, and my dear Fanny was never unmindful of them; but of late I have not been so careful as perhaps I ought; nor did I know to day, what was the poor woman's disorder. Do not however lose another minute before you begin to prepare some broth for her.

Hannah instantly departed, but soon returned with a basin of tapioca, which she justly thought more suitable to the present condition of her lady than any refreshment of a more solid kind could have been; and in less than half an hour afterwards, this valuable servant came to say that she had put the mutton to stew, taken her own dinner, and was ready to go and fumigate the room of the sick woman. This was a process with which she was well acquainted; and the eminently beneficial effects of which in fevers she had often witnessed; but as all my readers may not be equally well informed on the subject, I will here put down an easy receipt.

Put half a pint of vinegar into a tin saucepan, and add to it half an ounce of pounded saltpetre: when this is melted in the vinegar, hold the saucepan in the

left hand, and with the right put in a red hot poker; and moving gently about the room and round the bed, let the steam which rises from it mix with the air. This should be done every four hours, making the mixture fresh every morning.

This fumigation destroys the contagion of the distemper, and is particularly necessary in the chambers of the poor.

Mrs. Mansfield commended the alacrity and good will with which the worthy Hannah performed this deed of charity, and giving her a bit of camphor to hold in her mouth while she was in the sick room, bade her strongly enforce the necessity of keeping it cool and airy. She also sent by her two changes of linen for the poor woman, and one for her bed; having several sets of a proper kind always by her, ready to be brought out at a minute's warning, to supply the pressing calls of poverty and sickness united, which should never ask in vain where the power of relieving them is bestowed.

The good widow was now left alone, and feeling greatly fatigued, tried to get some repose upon the sofa: but sleep fled from her aching eyes. She was languid and weary, but restless. Such a condition to the generality of people is most wretched; but she had that composure of mind, that *peace within*, which enables us "to endure all things:" and though she could not steadily fix her thoughts upon any object, her wanderings were perplexed rather than painful. Soon after the return of Hannah, she took a dish of coffee and went to bed, where she slept tolerably, and arose the next morning at her usual time, apparently much better, though still languid. Her first care was to send to the sick woman, and she had the pleasure of hearing that a wonderful amendment had taken place. The first fumigation of the room, and the clean linen which was put on immediately after, had given her great refreshment, and after she had, at the proper time, taken a second

dose of yeast, she had fallen into a sweet sleep, which continued for several hours, and she had since taken broth and biscuit many times, and continued to amend.

This account was highly gratifying to Mrs. Mansfield, who remained during the day in a state which could hardly be justly called sickness or health. She had no positive ailment, but seemed to herself to be but half awake, could take little nourishment, and was incapable of paying much attention to any thing. The next day, which was Sunday, not being able to attend public prayers, according to her constant custom, the minister called, after the evening service, to inquire respecting her health. She was lying upon the sofa when he came in, which seemed to answer the first question that he meant to ask. "I see, dear madam," said he, "that my fears were but too well founded; it must have been a serious cause which kept you from the house of prayer."

Lady. I am indeed far from well, and I thank you for this kind visit of inquiry: to-morrow, I should have requested the favour of seeing you.

Minister. I rejoice that I have been before-hand with your wishes, and hope I need not assure you, that it will highly gratify me to be serviceable to you in any way.

Lady. Short as your residence in this neighbourhood has been, I should be most ungrateful for your past friendliness if I could doubt it. I am not at present very ill, but I know not how soon I may become so, and it is best to make all necessary arrangements for both worlds as fully as we can, before the task becomes difficult. Immediately after the death of my child, I made my will, leaving a small estate, which I inherited from my father, to his nearest relation, a worthy man, but living in a distant county, and so much engaged in business, that I have never seen him. Besides this, I have two thousand pounds to dispose of, the half of which I have divided amongst

my mother's relations, who are few and well provided for. In the disposal of the remaining thousand, I shall, as my executor, give you some trouble. You will find a small legacy to my servant, besides my furniture and clothes, and several sums to worthy persons who are, I know, in narrow circumstances; all together to the amount of five hundred pounds. Out of the last five hundred are to be paid the small annuities which I have named for the lives of several old or sickly persons, who would otherwise be heavy sufferers by my death. This will at first take up the whole interest of the money; but as they drop off, I would have the principal so released, given to the funds for the spread of gospel truth and Christian morality, which you will find particularly mentioned in my will; so that in the end the whole money will be vested in them, and, I trust, doing something towards furthering the approach of our Master's blessed kingdom, when the donor sleeps in the peaceful mansions of the tomb. The remainder of my income belongs to the property of my dear husband, and will be disposed of as his will directs.

Minister. Be assured, dear madam, that should I survive you, I will most carefully attend to all that you wish; but I hope and trust that the time is not near: we can ill spare such an example as you daily give to all who know you.

Lady. Ah sir, I have little besides good intentions to plead in my own behalf. But, lifting up her meek eyes and one hand, God is love! he will mercifully pardon the faults and errors of those who diligently strive to serve him.

A soft flush appeared upon her cheek, and after a silence of a few minutes, she thus went on.

You cannot wonder that I should look forward with delight to a moment which will realize all that my heart pants after. Believe me, sir, my thoughts are not confined to the happiness of a re-union with those

whom I most loved on earth ! My soul mounts higher ; it looks to, it aspires after a state in which God will be more sensibly known, more dear to the affections of his children than any inferior being can be : when our natures will be so purified and exalted, that we shall behold him more clearly, and love him more ardently than we have now words to express or imaginations to conceive !

These great thoughts were too powerful for the weak frame which embodied them ; a faintness came over her, but fortunately a glass of water and some hartshorn were upon the table, and by a proper application of them she was soon recovered.

Minister. You have exerted yourself too much, dear madam, and must repose : but before I leave you I must beg your directions with respect to the physician you wish to consult, for I will not lose an hour in sending for him.

Lady, smiling. You are too easily alarmed ; I am in a weak state, but perhaps not even in danger of a serious illness. Have the goodness to come to me again in the morning, and I will then do whatever you advise. Indulge me, dear sir, in this ; I cannot think of calling any one out in the night, unless it is quite necessary.

The good minister unwillingly complied with her wishes ; and taking an affectionate leave, she soon afterwards retired to her apartment, where she passed a sleepless and uneasy night. Early in the morning she was informed that her friend was come, and begged to have her promised directions, which, without further delay, she sent to him ; feeling herself to be in a state which really required medical help. Her own illness however did not prevent her from thinking of the sufferings and wants of others : she had directed that the poor woman who had been the last object of her care, should be supplied with every thing that could forward her recovery, and had now the satisfaction of hearing that the yeast and

fumigations were no longer necessary, the fever having left her, and that she took nourishment and gained strength every hour.

About the middle of the day, Mrs. Mansfield was again visited by her friend, who informed her that his servant was returned from Manchester, and that the doctor would be with her in a short time. "And now that I have gained one point, dear madam," said he, "I am aiming at another, upon which I have so entirely set my heart, that I trust you will not refuse it to me. I have this evening promised to comply with the earnest entreaties of my daughter, and bring her with me to visit you; and you must oblige me with permitting her to remain here till you are perfectly recovered. She is young, but I will answer for her care and abilities as a nurse: she had, alas! too good an opportunity of learning that valuable art during the long illness of her dear mother. Though her acquaintance with you is short, it has been sufficient to inspire a degree of affection and respect which makes her anxious to exert all her powers for your comfort and benefit.

Lady. I can have only one objection to this most friendly offer; but that is a serious one. It is possible that my complaint, which I plainly perceive to be feverish, may become infectious. Should your dear Emma catch the distemper from me, I might be the means of depriving you of your darling child, and society of one likely to become a most valuable member.

Minister. Talk not so, dear madam; suffer us to perform a sacred duty, by doing our utmost to preserve a life so precious. The danger of infection, in a house like yours, and with every precaution taken, is not worth mentioning, while the benefit to my daughter by attending upon you at such a time, may be more than even a father can calculate. Let her see how a true Christian is supported under the most trying circumstances; it will be a noble lesson, writ-

ten in living characters on her heart. I have learned from the experience of many years, that "it is better to go into the house of mourning than into the house of joy," and I am anxious to impress the same profitable conviction upon the mind of my child.

Lady. You plead as I, on a like occasion, should have done for my Fanny, and I can no longer resist. May I be enabled so to pass through the trying hours which perhaps are near at hand, as to leave every pious impression that you wish indelibly impressed upon the heart of your Emma!

The physician now arrived, and the minister soon after took his leave, promising to return in the evening with his daughter. The doctor carefully examined into the state of his patient, and after writing a prescription, gave minute directions with respect to her treatment to the faithful Hannah, who was well qualified for the office of a nurse, by the practice which, under her benevolent mistress's instructions, she had had amongst the poor.

Notwithstanding all her care, the disorder of her lady increased hourly; and when Mr. Grey and his daughter came, she was so ill that the amiable Emma resolved to spend the night in her room, Hannah agreeing to go to bed, on condition of being allowed to take her place at break of day. Towards midnight the fever ran high, and she became delirious. Had not Miss Grey been happily possessed of a calm steadiness of mind, not very common at her age, she must have been alarmed by the change which so suddenly took place in her friend, from a sweet placid composure to a sudden and rapid effusion of words, to which, for the most part, no distinct meaning could be affixed. Sometimes, indeed, she would repeat the names of those dear departed ones who filled so large a part in her heart, and sometimes a broken sentence in the form of prayer or praise, would falter on her lips, and then a sweetness, almost angelic, would spread itself over her features,—but in a moment it was gone, and wild, incoherent words succeeded.

It was a trying night to the youthful Emma ; often in the course of it did she lift up her heart to God ; praying him to restore those faculties which had been so zealously employed in the cause of Christian piety ; and picturing to herself the delight of hereafter believing that she had contributed towards an end so desirable, so “ devoutly to be wished.” These interesting thoughts, and the successive kind attentions with which she occupied herself about her friend, made the time appear so short, that it seemed rather a disturbance than a relief, when, at break of day, Hannah came to take her place, and she could hardly be prevailed upon to retire into another apartment for a few hours of rest.

Early on the following morning the good minister arrived, and was making anxious inquiries at the door of Mrs. Mansfield’s chamber, when a light and hasty footstep was heard upon the stairs. It was Sarah, who, as soon as she saw Mr. Grey, courtesied and stood in silence. “ Come up, my good woman,” said he, “ I need not ask your business here. Our dear friend is very ill, I fear dangerously ill,—but the will of God be done.”

Poor Sarah lifted up her hands and streaming eyes, a picture of silent woe, and Mr. Grey going into a small study which joined the lady’s apartment, beckoned her to follow him, and thus addressed her.

Mr. Grey. I do not wonder at your concern : no one can know this excellent woman without feeling anxiously desirous to keep her longer here.

Sarah, still weeping. O sir, she was and is every thing,—all the world to me. I owe to her all that I have, and, under God, all that I hope for ; and I am now come to beg that I may stay here as long as — O good sir, I hope you do not think that we shall lose her.

Mr. Grey. That can only be known to *Him* in whose hand is the life of every creature. I earnestly

hope and pray that she may be restored to us ; but I fear she has hardly strength to resist so violent an attack.

Sarah. Then I have only this to ask, that I may be allowed to be with her, and tend upon her to the last. Do, good sir, beg for me that I may do this.

Mr. Grey. Most willingly would I do so, did not I know that you have a family of children who cannot be provided for without your care.

Sarah. I have contrived it all. As soon as I heard of my dear lady's having caught the fever, and that it was likely to go worse with her than, by her good help, it had done with the poor woman on the Green, I ran to my neighbour Mrs. Bennet, who, though once an enemy, is now, by her means, become my friend, and just reaching a chair in her kitchen, sunk down quite unable to speak, my heart swelling to such a degree that I thought it would have burst. She opened my stays, and rubbed spirits upon my temples, and at length I became easier and began to weep : but my sorrow was more than I can tell, and chiefly because I could not go to nurse the dear lady in so dangerous a case. When my good friend found this, she offered to send for my mother to come and stay with the children, and said she would herself take care that they wanted for nothing while I was away. O sir, I cannot tell you how thankful I was ; and in the remainder of yesterday, last night and this morning, I have put every thing in order, and have taken leave of my dear children, the infant and all, for I had weaned him just before ; and it will go near to break my heart if I am not allowed to stay.

Mr. Grey. Was your husband willing that you should come ?

Sarah. I got Mrs. Bennet to ask him, and as she does so much for us and for our children, he could not refuse her ; and I am in great hopes that when he finds how comfortable my poor mother will keep the house, that he will consent to her staying with us, which I have quite set my heart upon.

Mr. Grey. And are you not afraid of catching this fever, which you believe to be so infectious?

Sarah. Ah sir, I will trust all to God! He will take care of my little ones, if I should die in such a cause. But may I not go to the dear lady? I know she will like to see me, and, if it may be suffered, I will never leave her night or day.

Mr. Grey. I will speak to my daughter on your behalf; both she and the worthy Hannah will be glad of so zealous an assistant. May it be the will of the great Disposer of events, that your labour of love may be crowned with the wished-for success.

Miss Grey now entered the room, and Sarah was kindly received by her: she had just left Mrs. Mansfield, who was so ill that they rejoiced that the physician had been engaged to attend her every day till some change took place. He accordingly came on that and many succeeding days; but notwithstanding his skill and the anxious care of her attendants, who did all that affectionate love could prompt them to, the disorder was not to be stopped or even checked in its progress.

The doctor calculated how long the fever would be in coming to a crisis, after which he said the question of life or death would soon be decided. But he warned her friends not to be sanguine in their hopes, as the violence of the complaint and her apparent weakness left little more than a possibility of a favourable issue.

All the neighbouring families for miles around, seemed deeply interested in the recovery of this excellent woman; but no one, out of her own house, manifested an anxiety so truly heart-felt as poor Thomas. Twice every day did he come to inquire after her, and the good Hannah so well knew the regard her lady had for him, that she generally answered him herself. She had indeed a mournful kind of pleasure in describing her condition to one who so fully shared in all her feelings.

The worthy Mr. Grey spent as much of every day as his other avocations would permit with his beloved daughter, and was sometimes taken by her into Mrs. Mansfield's room. She was seldom sufficiently herself to know him ; but he would stand by the side of her bed, and with uplifted hands supplicate the Father of Mercies for her relief. All waited with increasing anxiety for the wished-for, yet dreaded crisis ; and the day before that on which it was expected to take place, as the minister and his daughter were taking their evening coffee in the study, they were informed that a gentleman, who seemed to have come a journey, requested to be admitted to them. He soon after entered, and announced himself by the name of William Mansfield. He appeared greatly shocked when he heard of the dangerous state in which his relation lay. " I see," said he, " that I am speaking to my cousin's friends, to those who take no common interest in her welfare ; but I have more reason than any other can have, to look up to her with grateful veneration. O sir, I have never seen this admirable woman, but I and mine are indebted to her for more than I can express ; and should I be deprived of an opportunity of pouring forth my thanks before her, it will be the heaviest disappointment of my life."

Mr. Grey and his daughter minutely described the present situation of their minds, how faint their hopes, and how weighed down by fears ; and almost with trembling agitation, told how soon the question of life or death would probably be decided : after which Miss Grey retired to the room of her friend, and her father, bidding her adieu for the night, took their new guest home with him ; and mutually pleased with each other, they spent the evening chiefly in an interesting discussion of the virtues and amiable qualities of her whom they so soon feared to lose.

The physician came the following day, and according to his expectation, pronounced that the fever had left his patient, but as he had foreseen, in so very weak

a state, that it would be little less than a miracle if she long survived. She was, however, in her perfect senses ; her eye, with its wanted intelligence, kindly greeted her friend and attendants as they approached the bed, and when they kissed her pale hands, each in turn felt their gentle pressure,

The doctor had ordered her to be kept perfectly quiet, and during the whole day you would hardly have known that a living creature inhabited the house. She was able to take but little nourishment in the course of it, yet in the evening was evidently better, speaking affectionately and gratefully to her delighted nurses, and inquiring for Mr. Grey. "Why is he not here?" said she. "I want to thank him for *you*, my Emma," tenderly pressing her hand. "If to-morrow is granted to me, pray let him come."

Mrs. Mansfield's inclination to speak was repressed as much as possible by her prudent attendants, and they had the comfort of seeing her spend a quiet and easy night. In the morning, with a sweet smile, she bade them hasten breakfast ; but when it came, she could eat little, and when they raised her up, was several times near fainting.

The doctor having left all necessary directions, excused himself from coming on that day, and it passed on much as the preceding one had done. In the evening, however, she seemed better than she had yet been, and having again mentioned her wish of seeing Mr. Grey, his daughter thought there would be no risk in telling her of the arrival of Mr. William Mansfield ; but with that intelligence she appeared greatly agitated, and begged that both might be immediately sent for. Emma would fain have delayed this till the following day. "If I had known, dear madam," said she, "that you had taken such an interest in your cousin, I would not yet have mentioned him ; I thought you had been almost strangers."

Lady. "So we are personally ; but he is dear to my heart, and," smiling, "I wish to commence an acquaint-

ance with him in this lower world : so you must give me an opportunity to-day ; I may have no other. Nay, my love, do not let the idea give you pain : and you, dear Sarah, try to wean your heart from the fond hope of my continuing much longer here. When can I die more happily than now ? with friends so beloved to close my eyes, with my senses so clear, and," lifting up her hand and eyes, " with a heart full of love and confidence in the Almighty Being to whom I go."

Emma. O say no more, dear madam, you will exhaust the little strength you have, even before the chief occasion for it comes. But if you will take a cordial, and try to compose your mind, I will at all events obey you by sending for our friends.

Mrs. Mansfield agreed to the conditions, and a message was sent to request their immediate presence. No regulations in the apartment were needful to prepare for their coming : it was now, as always, kept like the mind of its inhabitant, fit for the examination of the purest eye. She looked around, and was pleased to perceive all in its usual state of order and neatness. Her own appearance was highly interesting, and there were about her all the comforts and proprieties, without any of the fopperies which are sometimes seen even in sick rooms. Unable to rise from her bed, she was supported by pillows, and as she waited in expectation of her friends, there was an animation in her countenance and a brightness in her eyes, which revived the hopes of those about her, though it ought perhaps rather to have alarmed their fears.

The gentlemen soon arrived, but Mr. Grey entered alone ; and after a tender and affectionate greeting, in which the grateful widow expressed her high sense of the kindness of his daughter, she asked why he was not accompanied by her cousin ; and being informed that he waited in the study till she wished to see him, " Let it be now then," said she, " I am impatient for his coming."

Mr. Wm. Mansfield entered the room, and ap-

proaching the bed, she held out her hand, which he took respectfully between his and affectionately kissed. She gazed upon him, but was unable to speak. "Dear lady," said he, "suffer me to retire : the sight of a stranger is more than you can bear at present."

Lady. No, do not go. I shall be better soon, and I have much to say to you.

Wm. Mansfield. And I, madam, have to unburden a heart which is filled with gratitude to you ; but I fear you are yet unable to hear all that I wish to say.

Lady. No, dear sir, tell me all that concerns your own welfare ; for I am deeply interested in it.

Wm. Mansfield. It is to you, dear lady, that I am indebted for a large part of the happiness that I now possess. My cousin, as you well know, after having for years been a father to me, had entirely cast me off, forbidding me to see or even write to him again, and that in so solemn a manner that I durst not disobey him. I cannot express to you how much I suffered. I loved my benefactor, and hoped that, in his latter years of life, I and mine should have an opportunity of, in some measure, returning the many obligations that we owed him. It was this, believe me, and not the loss of worldly goods which his displeasure must occasion to me, that chiefly lay upon my heart. I have never coveted wealth ; but the affections of my cousin were so dear to me, that I would have given up any thing, less than my principles and the lives of my family, to preserve them.

In this uneasy state did I remain till last Monday, when I was astonished by a hasty summons to attend him immediately at Bath. The servant informed me that his master had been dangerously ill, and on my arrival I ascended the staircase which led to his apartment with a beating heart and trembling limbs ; but the moment I entered, he opened his arms to receive me, and with expressions of tenderness kinder than I had ever before heard from his lips, told me, that I owed all to you ; that when his heart was softened by

illness and a near prospect of the grave, a letter which you had written some time ago in my favour happened to meet his eye ; that he had read it many times over, and that it had worked the change I saw.

A soft flush of delight was diffused over the benignant countenance of Mrs. Mansfield ; she raised her beaming eyes to heaven, and her lips moved ; but the agitation of her mind was more than her weak frame could bear : the transient glow which had visited her cheeks and lips suddenly retired, leaving them even paler than before, and it was with difficulty that she was kept from fainting.

The gentlemen, fearing that too much had already been said, retired into the study, and sat silently meditating on the change so soon likely to take place in the interesting object of their regards : a change so glorious to herself, but so lamentable to the many who were cheered and edified, in their journey through life, by her affectionate attentions, and the excellent example which, whether in sickness or in health, she every hour displayed before their eyes.

Sarah seldom quitted the room of her dear lady ; and on the occasion of her late alarm, Miss Grey having rung the bell, Hannah obeyed its summons. Mrs. Mansfield, however, soon recovered, and being informed that her cousin was still in the house, appeared satisfied, and after a silence of some time, asked whether Thomas knew the state that she was in. She was told by Hannah of his constant and anxious inquiries, and that he was then in the house, waiting her return, for a more particular account. " Let him then come up," said she ; " I may not again be able to speak to him before we meet in a better place."

He joyfully obeyed the unexpected call. But when he entered the room, and saw the pale, yet sweet and animated countenance of her to whom he had long looked up as the most perfect of the human race, he suddenly stopped, and clasping his hands together, involuntarily dropped on one knee, beholding her as

an angelic being whom it seemed a sort of profanation to approach. She, however, with her accustomed graciousness, held out her hand : " Come near, my friend," said she, " and tell me for the last time, that you will go steadily on in the path of righteousness till we meet in those happy regions which the infinite goodness of our heavenly Father hath prepared for those who love him."

Poor Thomas was unable to speak ; and after a pause, she went on. " Praise God with me, bless him, thank him for thus peacefully, thus happily bringing me to the end of my earthly career. What more could I have asked than he has thus graciously given."

Thomas. O madam ! death has no terrors for you : you have gained that victory which is through our Lord Jesus Christ. I see that a real Christian can not only look it in the face, but look beyond it, to that blessed country, which neither sin nor sorrow can ever enter.

Lady. Prepare yourself diligently for the state in which you now see me, for it must speedily be your own. Take heed unto your ways, and be fully confident that if you are " faithful unto death," God will bestow upon you " a crown of life."

Thomas, kneeling and clasping his hands. In my heart, dear lady, will I treasure up your words : next to the holy book of God, they shall be the guide of my remaining days, and when they are ended, may we meet again in that land of blessedness to which you first pointed out my way.

Mrs. Mansfield, whose strength seemed rather to increase than diminish, now desired that Mr. Grey and her cousin might be called in. As they came near, a sweet smile spread itself over her features. " I have now," said she, " standing round my bed, those whom I most love upon earth, those who, since the loss of my beloved husband and child, have most contributed to soothe my pilgrimage through it, and I see you with looks of love watching thus its latest

stage. O my Father," lifting up her eyes, "thou hast guided me through life, thou supportest me in death ! What but the incense of an adoring heart have I to offer in return for *all* !" After a long pause, which no one seemed disposed or indeed able to interrupt, " I thought" said she, " that I had much to say to each of you, but I must cut it short. Believe me, my cousin," turning to Mr. Wm. Mansfield, " you have rejoiced my heart. Remember me tenderly to my uncle, bid him not grieve for my loss, and tell him that the comfort of a Christian death gives a foretaste of the joys that shall be hereafter. Dry those tears, my affectionate Sarah ; it is the hand of a Father which is leading me away, and shall I unwillingly follow its direction ? No, no : I have long looked foward to this hour ; it has been the business of my life to prepare for it ; and though I know that I have done but little, and that little most imperfectly, yet I have the joyful testimony of a good conscience, that ' in simplicity and godly sincerity ' I have had my conversation in the world ; and my entire faith in the infinite goodness and mercy of God, as declared unto us by his Son, leaves me no shadow of a doubt with respect to his gracious forgiveness of my many faults and errors." After a long pause,— " O my friends, praise God, praise him for all that he gives us in this world, but *above all*, for the glorious assurance of *eternal life* ! The moment seems already present to my sight, when at the sound of the Redeemer's voice, the graves shall give up their dead, and the faithful, clothed in the unfading robes of immortality, arise to meet their Lord ! The hour approaches, when ' He who shall come, *will come*, and will not tarry ! ' Yes, my friends, we shall soon be called to dwell where God will be with us, and Jesus the ' author and finisher of our faith. ' "

She stopped, appearing nearly exhausted. " Dear madam," said Mr. Grey, " let us leave you for the present : to-morrow we will again request permission to return." She made a motion for them to stay, and

speaking at first with some difficulty, thus addressed them.

"To-morrow," waving her hand, "is not for me in this world. O that in the dawn of an eternal day, we may all meet in love, as now. Receive, receive the last blessing of your dying friend : her last prayer for you and for herself is that we may be accepted by our God, as humble followers of Christ ; for ' it is a faithful saying, If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him ! ' ' Come then, come quickly ! even so come Lord Jesus ! ' "

The last words faltered upon her lips and were scarcely audible, all around her believing that her parting breath fluttered upon them : she sunk down, and remained without motion for a considerable time, " Leave us, my father," said Miss Grey, who sustained herself with surprising firmness, not a tear falling from her eye, " but do not leave the house ; she may revive, and again wish to see you."

The gentlemen and the almost heart-broken Thomas immediately withdrew, and the anxious nurses perceived that the dear object of their solicitude still lived. After a time a nervous restlessness took place, and a difficulty of breathing, and during those painful moments, they knelt around the bed, contemplating the last faint struggles of mortality. At length, after a pause of perfect stillness, a marked appearance of sensibility revisited the eyes of the dying saint. She turned them upon each of her friends, with a look of inexpressible sweetness, and then towards heaven, as to their *resting place* ! her pale lips moved, but no sound was uttered, and the last incense of her devout and grateful heart, silently ascended to the throne of grace and mercy.

Many minutes passed, after they were well assured that all was over, before one of the attendants moved ; but Miss Grey, still retaining her former firmness, at length arose, and after gazing for a time on the composed countenance of her friend, she kissed her forehead and lips with the most affectionate tenderness,

and turning to Sarah, who was also rising, "No hand but mine," said she, "shall close these benignant eyes. O joyful, glorious hour, when they will open to beam angelic lustre throughout the endless ages of eternity!"

When this last sad office was performed, she could no longer support herself, but sunk, nearly insensible, upon a chair which stood near the bed. Sarah brought drops and water, while Hannah ran to call her father, who, as soon as she could walk, conducted her into the study, from whence Mr. Wm. Mansfield had retired to the parlour; and placing her with himself upon a sofa, her head reclining on his bosom, "My Emma," said he, "you have performed a noble part, you have done for our inestimable friend all that I wished, and even more than I your fond father expected from you. During her severe and trying illness, you were a daughter to her; and when the last sad scene arrived, I witnessed that no tear of yours disturbed the saint-like calmness of her dying moments: now let them freely flow, my child, it will relieve your overburdened heart."

Emma. O sir, how good you are, and how soothing are your praises to my troubled mind. Dear, dear departed saint! she will be ever present to my fond remembrance.

Mr. Grey. May it be so, my daughter; you cannot think of her too much. May her piety, her humility, her active Christian charity, be the models for your future imitation. Your situation is, in many respects, similar to what hers has been, and from nature she received no talents superior to those which you possess.

Emma. Pray for me then, my father, pray that I may be enabled to emulate her in the use of them. In addition to what I can spare from my own means, let me be the distributor of the charities which she has bequeathed. In doing this I shall have the delight of continually hearing her blessed and praised; and O Almighty Father! grant that I may so tread in her footsteps from day to day, that after a life of real

Christian piety on earth, I may be united to her in those regions of bliss which thou hast prepared for all thy true and humble worshippers."

In conversation like this did the good minister continue with his daughter, till he had in a great degree composed her agitated mind, after which he departed, and she retired to rest, with a determination not to leave the house of her friend till her remains were deposited in their last earthly mansion. Mr. Wm. Mansfield having formed the same resolution, an apartment was also prepared for him; and full of the affecting scene which he had just witnessed, he employed a part of the night in writing the following letter to his cousin.

MY DEAR SIR,

My last few lines informed you of the melancholy and dangerous state in which I found your incomparable niece, and I trust has in some measure prepared you for the contents of this. Alas! you already too well know what I am going to relate, your fears run before my pen, and your heart already tells you that the best of women has performed her task upon earth, and is now, secure from all chance or change, awaiting the call of her glorified Master.

O sir, I saw her but once,—but *that once*, those few moments will be ever present to my mind. What she bade me say to you, I reserve till we meet, and will only write of what I have this evening seen and heard. Nothing but the purity of her heart, and the truly christian life she led, could have imprinted on her countenance such a heavenly character. There was at times a devout sublimity in her eyes, which spoke a soul "athirst for God!" and looking earnestly forward to the time of appearing in his glorious presence!

Before I saw this incomparable woman, my heart was full of gratitude towards her, for her generous intercession on my behalf, to which under heaven I owe your forgiveness and favour: but the benefit

which I trust I have now received, is of a still more precious nature : for to ensure a death like hers, I must imitate her life. I was early taught to adore and reverence my Creator, and to seek the good of my fellow creatures ; but I trust that in future I and mine shall be more ardent in our piety to God, and more charitable and affectionate to our brethren of mankind.

My mind is so filled with the scene which has but now passed before my eyes, that I could spend the night in writing, and not tell you all I feel. But I have already perhaps said more than your weak health and spirits can well enable you to bear, and will only add that I am with the truest regard,

Your ever grateful and affectionate.

WILLIAM MANSFIELD.

This letter was immediately dispatched, and soon after the following answer was received.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

I can never cease to lament the loss of her whom you justly term the best of women, for to me it can never be repaired. I looked, or rather I ought to have looked up to her as my best friend and adviser, in the preparation which she has often warned me that I ought to make for the state which she is now in, and for which I cannot be far distant. Since I have by her means been happily reconciled to you, I have loved her as a daughter, and every hour felt more and more convinced, that the way to render the remainder of my days comfortable, and lay up a treasure in that country which will be our *abiding place*, was to put myself under her gentle guidance, and make her the director of all my plans of happiness, for this world and the next. I was meditating on this idea, which fast gained ground in my mind, when your first letter came, and burst asunder the web of virtuous comfort, which I had been weaving for the repose of my future days on earth, and to open my way to a place, where, after the turmoil

and disappointments of this mortal life, my soul might find a final resting place.

But let no one delay for a single hour to do a needful thing. Months, years ago, I might have done this! but now all is vanished, all beyond my reach. She was the corner stone upon which my fabric of piety and benevolence was to be raised, and without her, I look in vain for a foundation on which to build it. From that time till the fatal certainty arrived, my mind was in a state of agitation more painful even than a knowledge of the worst.

With respect to the dear angel herself, I cannot wish her back in a world of cares and troubles; a world in which she had suffered losses which would have made any other woman the melancholy victim of regret and discontent. But she, like her beloved master, was perfected by sufferings, and when I have had time to recover myself and collect my scattered thoughts, I too will try to resign my will, to the will of Him who ordereth all events.

You tell me, my dear cousin, that the death bed of this saint has been to you a precious lesson: come then and teach it to one who needs it more. You and your family shall in future be all the world to me; from this hour I renounce its pride and its luxuries. I feel as one who walks upon the verge of life, and views the vessel waiting only for a breeze, which will launch him on the boundless ocean of eternity! Let me hasten then to put on the heavenly uniform of holiness, and stow the lingering bark with all the good deeds that I may now have time for. As the first of these, and a specimen of the chief use which I mean hereafter to make of my wealth, I enclose a note for one hundred pounds, which I desire may be given amongst the neighbouring poor, on the day that the precious remains of my niece are committed to the earth.

Fine and expensive funerals I know she disapproved; therefore let her own directions on that point be exactly followed. But at the time when I pro-

mised myself such pleasure in visiting the dear creature herself, about May or June, tell the worthy Mr. Groy that you and I will spend a week or two with him, and then a monument shall be erected to prolong the memory of her excellence: that though dead, she may still speak; warning and persuading succeeding generations, even from the tomb.

What you mentioned in your first letter, lays me under obligations of the tenderest kind to the good minister and his daughter, and their kindness to the dear departed, shall be repaid as far as I have power to do it. We will establish a friendly intimacy between our families, the common love of both to her dear memory will be a sacred bond of union. We will also inquire out all the poor to whom she was attached, and they shall share my bounty.

Why did I say that I could form no plans for future virtuous happiness? Ah, my cousin, I feel that if we have the inclination, God will graciously supply the means. Talk no more, dear William, of my forgiveness, what had I to forgive but your superior worthiness!

The dear departed is never absent from my thoughts, and I can conceive no *real bliss* but that of being reunited to her in a better world. But can I without presumption hope for this? I, who am only *entering* on the christian course? O that I had earlier found this blessed path: how far by this time might I have been advanced, how near to heaven! But alas, the eleventh hour of my day is come, while little of the allotted labour is performed. I cannot with him in the vineyard, plead that I was not *called* till now; for the sacred book of heavenly instruction has from my childhood been open before me; but I turned away from its precious pages, and sought only for that knowledge which would serve the short lived purposes of the present time. I have wasted the morning and the noon, but the evening is still left, before the "night cometh in which no man can work." Come, come my friend, my fellow-labourer,

and teach me by diligently employing what remains, to make the amends that are still possible for past neglect. Come and console the heart, while you direct the conduct of your adopted father;

THOMAS MANSFIELD.

Before I conclude this little history, indulge me, my reader, in a few reflections on the extensively beneficial influence of active Christian piety, which has been exemplified in the life and death of the good widow.

Many well meaning persons, with talents and acquirements fully equal to hers, go through the world without suspecting that they could, or ought to be any thing more or better than the insignificant beings we behold them. They perform what are called the duties of their stations, in such a manner as to avoid the censures of the world, or the reproaches of their families, and this is all they aim at, all they believe to be required from them. But the mere absence of evil, is not good. Such slothful, such low minded persons cannot hope to be numbered with the "good and faithful servants," who have walked "worthy of God, who hath called them into the kingdom of his glory."

The usefulness of her whose example I wish particularly to recommend to females of independent fortune, was not, we see, likely to end even with her life: many of those whom she had been the means of converting from evil, were now become actively good, and daily extending the benefit to others: her uncle whom she thought beyond the reach of her pious efforts, looks back upon them with a conviction which at the time he would not acknowledge to himself; and the amiable Emma Grey, is likely, by emulating her piety and virtues, to become a perfect copy of what she was. Thus from one individual, with apparently little power or means of influence, what good may spread on every side!

Say not that you have no power, no talents, to

advance the Christian cause, to forward the blessed kingdom of your Lord : look into your own heart and conduct, and then tell me whether they have proved you earnest in a desire to do so? Do you cover your table with delicacies, and thinking that too little, spread it again to awaken the cloyed appetites of your guests? Do you thus expose yourself to blame for extravagance, and to ridicule for folly and vanity, while your sick or aged neighbour is pining for want? Do you decorate your own frail body with a useless variety of gay trappings, while perhaps in the very house of prayer, you see the shivering victims of disease and poverty, wanting the covering, which the superfluous expense of yours would amply furnish to them? And do you waste at the card table, or in other most unprofitable employments, that *precious time*, which the most thoughtless and ignorant must be sensible, might be bestowed in a thousand ways more profitable to their own hearts and understandings, and more beneficial to their fellow travellers through a world of trial?

If this, or what resembles this should be your conduct, do not say that Mrs. Mansfield's character is above your mark, but that you have never *aimed so high*. And if what *she* attained is above your ambition, above your groveling wishes, how will you aspire to the imitation of *Him* who was the *perfect* model of all human excellence? And without an ardent desire, and strenuous endeavour to *follow in his steps*, we are his disciples but in name! Remember that when the awful day of account arrives, we shall be tried, not by the standard of the world, but by the standard of that Master whose holy and benevolent precepts it should be the constant employment of our lives, to understand and practice. Look well to it then, ye who live in careless selfishness, disregarding the ignorance, the miseries, and the vices of your fellow-men, and know that for this criminal neglect ye will be brought into judgment! "For-

asmuch as ye did it not unto the least of these, ye did it not unto me !”

Mr. William Mansfield was equally gratified and affected by the perusal of his cousin's letter : his generous heart glowed with delight, to perceive the happy change of disposition which it displayed, and he resolved to do all that in him lay, to promote the future virtue and felicity of his benefactor. He gave the letter to Mr. Grey, who could not read it without tears. “ The influence of our late dear friend,” said he, “ reminds me of the fabled power once ascribed to a certain stone, of turning all it touched to gold : she in like manner seems to have purified and spiritualized all with whom she has been nearly connected. Happy, thrice happy power of communicating virtue, ‘ for its fruit is better than gold, yea than much fine gold ;’ ‘ for whose findeth it findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.’ ”

The day appointed for the funeral arrived : the burying ground was near, and according to her written directions, she was carried to the grave by six poor women decently clothed in black, the two foremost being Sarah Williams and the wife of Thomas. Mr. Wm. Mansfield and Miss Grey went as chief mourners, though there were many others ; for as she was universally respected and beloved, the whole neighbourhood, and especially the poor, in great numbers assembled on the solemn occasion. It was expected that Mr. Grey would address them at the grave, and though he before doubted whether he should be able to do so, he felt his powers revive within him, at the time when he most wished to call them forth ; and in a discourse which penetrated the heart of every hearer, he commented upon the truly Christian life and death of her whom they had now attended to her last earthly home ; and earnestly exhorted all around him, to be like her, *true worshippers* of God, as disciples and followers of his beloved Son Jesus Christ : To detest the vices and crimes, and to raise their minds above the follies, the vani-

ties, and the selfishness of the present world ; making all that befalls them in their passage through it, a means of preparation for that immortal state, that never ending life into which the great " Captain of our salvation " is already entered, and from whence, at the time appointed by his heavenly Father, he will come in great power and majesty to call his faithful followers from the tomb.

" O my beloved brethren," said the preacher, " cast away from your hearts, and from your conduct, whatever you would fear, or be ashamed to own, at that most solemn hour. Let every future day, be a day of preparation ; that at whatever time your Lord comes, he may find you watching. ' Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning ! ' Praise and adore your great Creator, with all the powers which he hath bestowed upon you, and spread the knowledge of His goodness far and wide. Let us not be content merely to pray for the approach of that happy time, when the will of God shall be done on earth, even ' as it is in heaven ; ' but let each of us in his different station, *zealously and actively labour* to hasten its arrival, for ' blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh, shall find so doing.'

" ' Awake then ! awake to righteousness,' and be not as those who have not the knowledge of God. ' Knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up by Jesus ; ' let us by a life of holiness and active virtue, make ready for His coming : trusting in ' the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort,' who thus invites his creatures to be blest :—' Come out from among the wicked, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and I will receive you, and will be a father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord.' "

THREE

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

ANSWERED,

RELATING TO

THE CHRISTIAN NAME,

CHARACTER, AND HOPES.

BY HENRY WARE, Jr.

MINISTER OF THE SECOND CHURCH IN BOSTON.

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THREE

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS, &c.

It is my object, in these pages, to consider and attempt to answer the three following questions :—

1. *What is it to be a Christian ?*
2. *How does a man become a Christian ?*
3. *How shall a man satisfy himself that he is a Christian ?*

They are important questions, of very deep and serious personal interest. They deserve a careful consideration and solemn reply.

I. What is it to be a Christian ?

✓ The word **CHRISTIAN**, is used in a particular and in a general sense. In a general sense, when we call those *Christians*, who dwell in a Christian community, and partake of the privileges of the gospel. Every such man is so named in distinction from a Pagan, or one who lives in a Pagan country. It is in this sense that we say any one is a Christian by birth.

Every man, also, who believes the scriptures, is a Christian in opposition to a Deist or Infidel, who does not believe the scriptures.

It is not concerning a Christian in either of these senses, that we are to inquire : but concerning him who is to be acknowledged as such, on account of the full influence of the gospel upon his own heart and character, and who, upon his own individual responsibility, independent of all other beings, is to receive a Christian's favour and happiness in the future world.

It is in this sense that the inquiry is so important to us. We are all of us Christians, if that mean, not to be Heathen. We are all of us Christians, I trust, in

the sense of not being Infidels. But it is still a question, are we Christians in the special, saving sense of the word, so that we can appropriate to ourselves the promises of the gospel, and lay claim to its hope and peace? If not, we might as well be Pagans or Infidels. It can avail us nothing to have the name, if we want the reality.

I say, then, first of all, to be a *Christian* is precisely the same thing as to be a *Disciple of Jesus Christ*.

A *Disciple*, to speak in general terms, is one who acknowledges any one as his teacher, and faithfully follows his instructions. Thus, for example, those who chose Socrates or Plato for their teacher, and lived according to their directions, imbibing, owning and practising their system of philosophy, were called their *disciples*. So the Jews were disciples of Moses; as some of them said to the man whom Jesus had healed, *thou art his disciple, but we are Moses' disciples*. And to the same purpose we read, *the Disciples were called Christians first at Antioch*.

To be a disciple of Jesus Christ, two things are necessary—to receive him as an Instructor, and to obey him as a Master.

First, To receive him as a teacher, to regard him as the instructor of our souls, at whose feet we are ready to sit as humble, docile pupils, and receive without question whatever he may communicate respecting God, and his character, and divine purposes. He that is thus eager and willing to learn of Jesus as God's appointed Teacher, or, which is the same thing, to take his religion from the New Testament, is so far a Christian.—And he has a perfect claim to the title, when, *secondly*, he carries into practical effect those instructions, and faithfully conforms himself to them in heart, disposition and conduct. This faith and confidence in him as a divine Teacher, and obedience to him as a Saviour, constitute a Christian.

Some, however, will step in here, and tell us that this is not sufficient. They will name a certain list of doctrines, which it is necessary to believe that Jesus

taught, and declare that no one is a Christian, who does not hold a certain specified form and number of religious articles.—Of such, I ask, who told you so? Who has given you a right to say, that there is only one sect in all Christendom which contains true disciples? For, in fact, the assertion amounts to this:—just as if it were not more well pleasing to our Lord, that one should come to him and learn of him with right dispositions and faithful endeavours, than that he should simply attain a correct set of abstract opinions. There is not a passage in the New Testament, which requires a completely unerring faith, before one can be numbered with the disciples of Christ. I can point to a multitude of passages which require a *life* without error; but I do not remember one which requires a *faith* without error. On the contrary, I recollect we are told “to receive the *weak* in faith;” and, what is more, to receive them without “doubtful disputations.”* I recollect, too, that while the twelve were always acknowledged by their living Master as his disciples, they had many great errors of faith, even in respect to the nature of his kingdom. But then they were humble, sincere, diligent learners—they listened to him and followed him, and placed all their confidence in him; and, therefore, notwithstanding their errors, they were received by him. It is plain, therefore, that no man is to be refused the Christian name solely on account of the supposed imperfection of his faith. They who have drawn up their articles, and declare that all who do not conform to them are not Christians, are trying men by a wrong standard—a standard, which their Master himself, by his conduct to his disciples, has discountenanced.

This point may be made perfectly clear at once, by appealing to every man’s experience and plain common sense. You meet with a man, who, in all the relations of life in which he moves, is marked for his uprightness and integrity, his good dispositions, and general benevolence. He says very little, perhaps seldom

* Rom. xiv. 1.

says any thing, about his religion; but withal is humble and distrustful of himself, mild and meek in his intercourse with men, punctual in his attendance on the worship and ordinances of God, and apparently diligent in the perusal of the scriptures, which he seems to reverence and love and live by. What do you say of this man? Do you not consider him a Christian? You have never heard him converse for half an hour on religious subjects;—you do not know any thing of his opinions on any one of the great doctrines which have divided the Church;—but you do not doubt that he is a Christian. Perhaps, well as you know him, you do not even know in what temple he worships, or with what church he communes; you have not thought to ask whether he be Methodist, or Quaker, or Episcopalian, or Baptist. But you do not doubt that he is a Christian. The evidence is stamped on every feature of his life; and you would as soon think of waiting for the anatomist to examine his body, before you would venture to call him a man, as you would wait to know his private opinions on controverted points, before you admit him to be a Christian. In such a case as this there is no dispute. All agree. All acknowledge Fenelon, and Lardner, and Doddridge, and Penn, and Wesley, to be Christians; and yet, on disputed topics, which some tell you is the standard, they all differed from each other as the four winds of heaven.

You meet with another man who presents a different aspect. He talks very often, and very long about his religion; it is the favourite topic of his conversation, on which he dwells with earnestness and zeal, and condemns all who seem to be less zealous than himself. He lays urgent stress upon the peculiar doctrines which he has adopted; he proclaims their excellence, he argues for their truth, he is almost ready to suffer martyrdom in their defence; and they are the very doctrines which are declared to be *the essentials* to the Christian. But then at the same time you discover that there is something in him of religious ostentation and spiritual pride; he does not govern his passions,

he indulges his appetites, is selfish, and exerts himself but little for the benefit of others; and is quite censorious and uncharitable in his judgments.—Now, what do you say of such a man? Do you think that his merely holding that set of opinions, which is said to constitute a Christian, gives him a fair title to the Christian name? Do you not at once judge, that his feelings, dispositions, and character, are more than an offset to these opinions? Does not every one judge so?

I have stated these two cases strongly, because it is easiest thus to test the principle. Upon such cases, and they are by no means imaginary, there can be no difference of opinion; and they prove, that it is perfectly absurd to pretend that any certain set of opinions, beyond an acknowledgement of the divine authority of Jesus Christ and his gospel, is essential to a Christian, or constitutes a Christian.

They prove to us, further, that he is a genuine disciple, who, having patiently and humbly learned of Jesus whatever he teaches, and cast himself on his gospel for salvation, faithfully cultivates *his* spirit, and forms his character according to that teaching and his example.

This is a definition which cannot be set aside. This will hold good amidst all the opposition of zeal and bigotry. This, in all practical decisions, ever has been, and ever must be appealed to, by the sober common sense and unanimous judgment of the whole christian world.

He may be more or less enlightened. He may be more or less an adept in subtleties of doctrine and mysteries of knowledge. He may see reason to hold the five points of one, or stronger reason to abide by the five hundred of another. But if he have, with a good and honest heart, gone to the word of Jesus himself, and imbibed his spirit, and brought forth the fruits of that spirit—"heretic" he may be, but he is still a Christian: and from the living grave of the Inquisition, or the flaming pile of Protestant persecution, his meek and lowly spirit shall ascend to a righteous Judge,

and be acknowledged in the presence of angels.—Many, many, will appear on the right hand at the last day, whom human judgment would not suffer to live, because they were no Christians!

How important, then, is it for us to avoid the error of making our private opinions the standard by which to judge the claims of our fellow men. It is not the right standard by which to try *ourselves*; much less by which to try others. We cannot go beyond their general characters; and if their characters, under a charitable construction, are agreeable to the upright and devout spirit of the gospel, it is to the last degree arrogant and criminal in us to deny them the Christian name. We may think their opinions erroneous, and say so, if we please; but to denounce them as not Christians, because it is *our opinion* that *their opinions* are erroneous—words cannot express the absurdity.

That we may the more fully understand the Christian character, let us go for a moment into detail, and notice some of the particulars of which it is composed.

1. First, then, the Christian is one who feels a deep and solemn interest in Religion, as a thing of the first importance to his happiness, and which is valuable to him above every thing else. This religious concern lies, as it were, at the bottom of his character. Not a feeling which excludes all interest in the world and the pursuits of life; for he attends to the cares of his present calling as faithfully as any man. But he does not think them, as others do, the only things worth attending to; he thinks religion more important, and mixes it with all other things. It has the first and ruling place amongst his desires.

2. The next thing is his devotedness to the Holy Scriptures. He humbly and thankfully betakes himself to them, as containing a complete and merciful revelation from God of all that pertains to duty, happiness and eternity. Conscious of his own insufficiency, he casts himself upon the scriptures in all his anxieties about religion and his soul, acknowledging no other

rule for his faith, and no superior guide to his conduct.

3. Another thing which distinguishes him, is his piety. Love to God is with him the first and great commandment, to which all the other affections submit, and from which all other duties flow. This regard to the Supreme Being, exhibited in love, trust, holy fear, and habitual obedience, is an essential trait in the Christian's character.

4. His regard to his Saviour is another trait. He thinks often of his holy Master, delighting to remember him, and to dwell upon his pure and beautiful character, and his wonderful love to man.

5. He is distinguished by his dispositions toward his fellow-men. His Master has taught him to feel toward them and treat them as brethren. He therefore does unto them, as he would have them do unto him. He is kind, mild, patient, and forgiving, not easily provoked, not proud, not censorious, not oppressive.—One of the great peculiarities in the gospel, lies in the meek and quiet spirit, which it inculcates and forms; in the graces of humility, purity, patience, meekness, forbearance, forgiveness, benevolence. It was these which gave such singular eminence to the character of Jesus Christ, and made it so lovely. It was these, which he required with particular earnestness of his disciples. It is these which the apostle Paul enumerates with especial distinctness as the *fruits of the spirit*; “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance.” It was these, which our Lord singled out for a pointed benediction when he began his ministry, proclaiming, Blessed are the meek, the humble, the pure, the peaceable, the mourning, the persecuted. Dr. Buchanan tells us, that when he visited the Syrian churches, he found that eminent Christians were distinguished amongst them as *Men of the Beatitudes*. A beautiful and expressive title! A Christian, then, is a MAN OF THE BEATITUDES. He walks in the gentleness of his Lord's example, in the benignity of his Master's spirit. Neither the fash-

ions of the world, nor the opinions of men, nor the principles of society, nor the solicitations nor example of those around him, can move him from a determined adherence to these maxims of his Lord. For he is aware, that just so far as he departs from them, he is unworthy the name of his disciple.

6. That he may keep alive in his heart this distrust of himself, this sense of his unworthiness and humility of soul, this reverence for the scriptures, this devotedness to God, and these holy and benevolent dispositions; he is faithful in waiting on all the appointed means of grace and improvement. He slights not God's worship, neglects not his ordinances, and fails not to be constant and persevering in the private exercises of faith and piety. He does not regard them as the end and summit of all attainment, nor think them worthy of boasting; but they are necessary, he feels, to his life and growth in religion, and they afford his highest satisfactions.

These are some of the main particulars in which the disciple of Christ is distinguished; and we thus learn what it is to be a Christian.

I come now to the next inquiry.

II. How does a man become a Christian?

We shall arrive most satisfactorily at the answer to this inquiry, if we will go back to the infancy of his being, and trace him onward to his full stature in Christian perfection.

When a human being is born into the world, it is an object of its Maker's complacency and love. Its soul is as yet unstained. It has done neither good nor evil. I do not say that it is an object of moral *approbation*; because one receives approbation only for what he has himself done. But if it have done no act of holy obedience to call for approbation, neither has it been guilty of sinful disobedience, to merit censure. It is just such as it was fashioned by God—innocent, lovely—therefore an object of God's complacent, kind, regard. And if during infancy it be remov-

ed from earth, its unblemished spirit flies upward, and is welcomed with a smile to the bosom of its Father's eternal love.

It was in the spirit of such reflections as these, that the Son of God, when he had taken little children in his arms and blessed them, declared that *of such is the kingdom of heaven*. He has thus encouraged us to look upon them as partakers of Divine favour; and has authorised us to believe and say, that every infant immortal, when first consigned to this state of discipline and preparation, is a member of the kingdom of heaven. The smiles of early infancy are sweet in the eyes of Heaven's King; the death of early infancy is but the fading of a beautiful flower, that is to bloom afresh in the garden of Heaven's King; their angels do always behold the face of their Father in heaven; and it is not his will that one of these little ones should perish.

But it is still very evident, that, spotless and lovely as the infant may be, it is yet no *Christian*: This implies, as we have seen, a knowledge of religion; and a practice of actual goodness, of which its helpless age is incapable. How then shall the infant become Christian?

I answer, in the first place, why not by instruction and education? He is *now* of the kingdom of heaven; and why should he ever leave it? As soon as his reason dawns, let him be taught the knowledge of God and his providence; as soon as his affections open, let them be fixed on the great and infinite source of excellence and happiness; let his earliest lessons be concerning the life and gospel of Jesus Christ, and his earliest steps be made to go in imitation of his example. May not this be done successfully, so that he shall inevitably and incontrovertibly become a Christian?—He never quits the kingdom of heaven of which he was originally a member; but, as soon as his moral powers begin their exercise, as soon as his moral accountableness commences, he chooses ~~him~~ for his Sovereign, Christ for his Master and Lord, ~~the~~ a gospel for his guide, his example for his pattern, his faith and hope for his sup-

port, his heaven for his home ;—he clings to them, lives by them, and as he grows in stature, grows also in favour with God and man.

The world, blessed be God, has seen many who thus have joined themselves to the fellowship of Jesus, without the misery and anguish of a late repentance ; who have devoted themselves to God from the cradle, and have trodden in no other path than that of purity and truth, so exhibiting the temper of their Master, that all have taken notice of them, that they have been with Jesus.

And certainly it is not strange that it should be so. It is the object of life to form man's character for eternity. For this purpose he is exposed in various ways and to various trials. If some are overcome by these trials, it were to be expected that some also would not be overcome by them. When so many ways are open at the beginning of life, and so many choose evil ways, it is not strange that some should select the good way ; that some should follow Christ, when so many follow the world. While such numbers lose the simplicity, openness, humility and purity of their infant spirits, it cannot be thought surprising that some should retain them.

We do not mean by this that they are faultless, and never sin. By no means. Notwithstanding their good dispositions, principles and resolutions, they doubtless sin often and much. But so do all Christians. The oldest, firmest, best, sin often and much. I have never heard of a Christian who was past sinning. The imperfection, therefore, of those who have become Christian by education, does not prove them to have no right to the name.

Many imagine it to be essential that a man be converted. But they seem not to consider the distinction between *conversion* and *repentance*. Every man must *repent*. But I do not see that it is possible for such an one as I have described to be *converted*, in the proper sense of that term. He doubtless has continual need of humility, and repentance, for his remaining sinful-

ness; but so have those, who have passed through the soundest and most satisfactory conversion. He may also at some particular season, feel the sense of this peculiarly burdensome and oppressive—as I doubt not every religious man has had such a season. But in him I have described, it cannot be considered as the period of conversion. For such periods of humiliation and concern occur to the most established Christians. They do not prove that *they* were no Christians before; neither do they prove that *he* was none: they are not accounted times of regeneration in *them*; neither should they be in *him*.—To convert is to turn; to be converted is to be turned—not partially, from one thing, opinion, or character, to its opposite; but completely. Now from what would you turn him? The most remarkable thing about him is his uniform regard to God and the gospel. You would not turn him from that. To what would you turn him? To the faith of the gospel, to the love of God, to the imitation of Christ, to sobriety, purity, righteousness, true holiness, temperance, and charity? Why, these things he has kept from his youth up; they have been the objects of his solicitude, and pains, and prayers, ever since he knew that he had a soul. You cannot turn him into what he is already; and how, then, can he be converted?*

*It may be thought that the verse, Matt. xviii. 3. presents an objection to what is here offered. *Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* But that it does not, it is evident from the following considerations.

1. This verse strikingly corroborates my main position—that all are to be regarded as at first members of the kingdom of heaven; for, in order that one who is not, may become so, he must go back to his childlike character.

2. It is probable that our Lord's meaning in this passage is limited, and not universal. He is rebuking the ambitious temper of his disciples, who desired to know *who is greatest*. His reproof we may suppose confined to this temper, *Except ye be turned from this disposition, and become as little children* :—which is made still more evident from the next verse :

We may be satisfied, then, that some men become Christians by education. They never go out from the kingdom of God; but, in spite of temptations, and frequent wanderings, and many stains of unworthiness, they are at heart, and in principle, God's servants and children. They grow up Christians.

But there is still a large class of men who have not thus attached themselves to religion, and who, if they ever become Christians, must become so in later life. Instead of taking the gospel for their guide, they have chosen some other leader; and, under the control of appetite and passion, or worldly principle, they have left the kingdom of God, thrown off his allegiance, and followed the devices of their own hearts, without regard to his authority or revelation. There are many such in the world; and the question occurs, how shall they become Christians?

There can be but one answer to this question, and that in one word: *By Conversion.*

To these men may be applied the description which the apostle gives of the gentile state of the Ephesians: dead in trespasses and sins; without Christ; having no hope; and without God in the world—alienated from the life of God, and ignorant of heavenly things

“Whosoever, therefore, shall *humble himself* as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

3. If we suppose the expression applicable to all others in a general sense, we must observe that it only states what is necessary to those who are not already Christians; they must return to the character of childhood. But it leaves us at full liberty to understand, that those who have kept that character cannot be included, because they cannot go back.

4. If from this, or other passages, it be inferred that conversion was essential to all in the first age of the gospel; this will not prove that it is essential now. Because it was the only possible mode *then*, but *now* there is another, the gospel being offered to the youngest children.

5. The Christian character is a certain state of heart and life. The evidence of its existence, in any case, is to be found not in a certain process of formation, but in the actual

through the blindness of their hearts. So far as this description is applicable to them, they, also, like the Ephesians, must put off the old and corrupt man, and be renewed in the spirit of their minds, and put on the new man, who, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness. *This is conversion*; and nothing short of this can be rightly called conversion. The bad man must become good; the sinful, holy; the irreligious, religious; the thoughtless and worldly, who have lived only for present good, must give their thoughts to God, and live for eternity—must renew the spirit of their minds, as well as the corruption of the outward man.

Upon this point, I am fearful that we do not think and insist sufficiently. Many, indeed, have a settled dislike to all language of this sort; and when you speak to them of conversion, or regeneration, they at once suspect you of fanaticism, and shut their ears to all that can be said. Undoubtedly a great deal of madness and mischief has been practised in the world under shelter of these names, and the sober part of mankind have become disgusted at the extravagances which they have sanctioned. But certainly it cannot be wise to throw away a doctrine because some have

state of the man. One may be a Christian, though utterly unable to describe the means by which he became so. And if he be already, all that conversion is intended to make him, conversion is clearly unnecessary. The question is, *What is he?* not, *Through what scenes has he been passing.*

6. The only solid foundation for the doctrine, which this text is thought to support, is, the supposition that every one inherits a thoroughly depraved nature, which lies under an eternal curse, and which can be made better only by a *literal* new creation, to which the power of God alone is adequate. This, of course, renders a supernatural regeneration necessary. These two doctrines stand and fall together. The one is an unavoidable consequence of the other. Those who maintain different views of the nature man has received from God, are not bound to receive a tenet, which stands on no ground but that of total depravity—a tenet, which is essential to Calvinism, but not to Christianity.

abused it. For the best doctrines have been perverted and abused. The simple question is, what must be done with those men who have passed from infancy to age, careless of their souls, and guided by no religious principles. How are such to become Christians, except by conversion or regeneration, or—I am not solicitous about the *name*, call it what you please—without a change of their dispositions, principles and habits? If you will tell me how, I will urge the matter no further. If you will tell me of any method by which a man, selfish, sensual, worldly, ambitious, proud, vicious, impious, can become humble, meek, spiritual, righteous and devout, without a change of his dispositions, without being renewed in the spirit of his mind, then I will give up the point at once. It is clear, as the shadow on the dial, that it is impossible. And I fear that we suffer ourselves to think of it too little. We suffer men to grow up in bad habits, their affections devoted to present objects, making an idol of sensual good, and forgetful of their accountability at last; and then we hope that they will become fit for heaven very easily; will enter on the way of truth, holiness and salvation, without doing any great violence to their former partialities, or greatly sacrificing their favourite desires. But is not this preposterous? Can there be conceived a greater change—a change of the very object of life, of the very principles of conduct, and of the prevalent dispositions of the soul? It is impossible that this should not be a great work; and important as it is great; and we wrong our fellow men, if we suffer them to imagine it small and easy, and of little consequence. Words cannot express the importance of the Christian character; and we cannot say too much of the importance of that change, which is necessary to produce it where it does not exist.

The unwillingness of many to believe that conversion, or regeneration, is necessary to any man, has principally, perhaps wholly, arisen from the injudicious and irrational manner, in which the doctrine is often-

times stated and defended. They have heard it declared, that man is entirely incapable of doing any thing in it by his own exertions, and that it is wholly, in its commencement, progress and completion, the arbitrary and sovereign work of God's spirit, whose influences he imparts or withholds at his pleasure.— This statement has appeared to them to take away all the guilt of the unconverted, and to destroy the doctrine of accountableness; while, laying great stress upon ardent, rapturous, indefinable feelings, it has invited and encouraged fanaticism, and cherished spiritual pride by the belief that they were all the result of God's special and distinguishing love. But the objections of a rational mind to *this* doctrine of regeneration, are wholly inapplicable to that which I am contending for, as the doctrine of the gospel. I speak of nothing arbitrary, mysterious, or fanatical; but of a change in dispositions, affections and character, to which any man is competent, in the use of his natural powers, assisted by the means which the religion of Christ puts within his reach, and by those Divine influences which are bestowed upon all who need. With the knowledge and faith of the gospel, it is in the power of any man to turn to God, *the Spirit helping his infirmities*. If the sinner would attain the Christian character and hope, he must diligently set himself to *work out his own salvation with fear and trembling*. It is then that *God will work in him to will and to do, of his good pleasure*. Without this diligence, the influences of the spirit are useless, as the sunshine and rain of heaven, to him who leaves his field, uncultivated, to run to waste.

We have thus learned, in answer to our inquiry, that the sincere and true disciples of Jesus Christ are some of them formed by a gradual growth in the regular education and discipline of life; while others are brought out, from amidst a vicious world, by a change in their views, feelings, dispositions, and principles of action, not different in kind, though less in

degree, from that by which heathen sinners were originally called to the Church.

III. Our third question is, *How shall a man satisfy himself that he is a Christian?*

There are many tests of Christian standing presented in the New Testament, differing according to the circumstances of those to whom they are applied, which it might be useful to every one to collect and accommodate to his own case. But there is none so often repeated, and with so much emphasis, as that of *obedience*. *Ye are my friends*, said our Lord, *if ye do WHATSOEVER I COMMAND YOU*. This saying of Jesus is the more deserving our regard, because it was solemnly uttered during his last interview with his disciples on the night before he suffered, and he evinced his sense of its importance by repeating it, though in a varied form, not less than five several times.* If it were a sufficient test for his disciples at that time, it must be so for all others.

It is true that on the same occasion he told them, *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another*. To the same purpose the apostle John: *By this do we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren*. These passages would seem to imply, that the sure test of Christian standing is brotherly love. But brotherly love is *one of the commandments* of Christ, even his new and special commandment. It is therefore included in the text which I quoted; and this is better as a universal guide, because more comprehensive, comprising every other rule, or guide, which might be selected or named. It coincides, also, with the whole spirit and purpose of the New Testament, and with the most frequently repeated declarations both of our Saviour and the apostles. When the young ruler inquired, *Good Master, what shall I do that I may have eternal life*; our Lord's answer was, *Keep*

* See John xiv. 15, 21, 23, 24, and xv. 8, 14.

the commandments. When told that his mother and brethren desired to see him, he replied, Who is my mother, or my brethren? Whosoever shall *do the will of God*, the same is my sister and brother and mother. He declared that the man *who heareth and doeth his sayings*, is like him who builds his house upon a rock, which nothing can overthrow; and that it is he only who *doeth the will* of his Father, who shall enter the kingdom of heaven. To the same purpose the apostle Paul:—not the *hearers* of the law, but the *doers* of it shall be justified. And again he says, that eternal life is promised to those who seek it by *patient continuance in well doing*. Passages of this import might be greatly multiplied, which would prove that the test I have selected is but the echo of the universal doctrine of the gospel.

It recommends itself also by its *simplicity and easy application*, as well as by the stress laid upon it by our Lord and the apostles. In the work of self-examination it directs the mind at once. It leaves no room for shuffling or evasion; but presents a direct, *home* question. We can be at no loss how to put it, or how to ascertain the reply. It is on a point which admits of evidence, clear, distinct, positive, undeniable evidence. There is no escaping by means of the obscurity of the thing inquired for, through any vagueness or equivocation. But, *Have I kept the commandments; do I do whatsoever I am commanded*, are questions so intelligible, plain and pointed, that we are compelled to see their meaning and feel the reply.

In all these respects, how greatly has this an advantage over other tests, which are sometimes used for determining our Christian standing. If it be certain *doctrines*, we could not be certain, amidst the unavoidable differences of those who even most nearly agree, that we held them in the right sense, or that they were attained with sufficient fairness of inquiry, or are accompanied by all their right consequences. If it be certain *feelings*, they are something which we cannot define, or express in words, or measure by any deter-

minate standard, and which may be mixed with a thousand undetected imperfections. If it be certain ceremonies, or observances, or a comparison of ourselves with other men, or any past experience of religion, it is obvious that they are all very fallacious and uncertain, and leave never-failing room for doubt, uneasiness and apprehension.

But when we come to the test of *keeping the commandments*, all is clear, settled, and unambiguous. It is only to know what they are, which is easily known, and the question is answered as soon as it is asked. Any man who looks at his life and character, can tell whether he have kept the commandments or not.—Nothing but the most criminal carelessness and unfaithfulness, can prevent his discovering it.

It should be considered, too, that this is the only test which is at all difficult, or amounts to an actual trial. External homage, of whatever sort, is easy. The hypocrite can give it. Inflamed zeal may be superficial, or constitutional, or unsanctified passion. Modes of faith may be, and most commonly are, the mechanical result of education or circumstances. They are given a man by his parents and teachers, not by his own efforts, or by the scriptures. There are very few of whom it is not evident, that if educated in a different way, and with other companions, they would have held a different faith. These things, therefore, leave uncertain the real state and character of a man. But *obedience* is by his own personal effort and trial; oftentimes demanding severe and toilsome labour, and requiring occasional sacrifices and privations, which demonstrate his sincerity, and the strength of his principle, and put beyond question the submission of his soul to God. There can be no doubt concerning the man whose obedience is uniform and universal.

Besides, this rule which I have borrowed from our Lord, short as it is, is far more comprehensive than any other. It embraces every thing. It omits nothing. Not a question concerning Christian character, or duty, can arise, which this does not embrace.—And here

it is important to prevent misapprehension. When we say that a Christian is known by his *keeping the commandments*—there are many ready to object to the assertion, and say, that the standard is altogether insufficient; that this is going no deeper than the outside; that this is neglecting internal principle and purity; for that the commandments may be kept from worldly motives, by a man who possesses nothing of Christian spirituality.

But this objection appears to be altogether founded in mistake. We consider that the internal principle is as much a *part* of the commandment, as the outward action, and that no man keeps the commandments of the gospel, who observes only their external requirements. It were absurd to imagine otherwise, because one of the chief and most distinguishing commands is, that the heart be pure, and the motive good. Impurity of heart, or a bad motive, breaks the command just as much as murder, or fraud, or false witness. It is a very erroneous notion, therefore, that the "commandments" only relate to external conduct. There are commandments for faith, repentance, humility, heavenly-mindedness, spiritual-mindedness, and every holy thought and exalted spiritual exercise. Every Christian feeling, desire and disposition, are as much comprehended in them, as sobriety of deportment, and honesty in dealings. They are all, consequently, comprised in that test of Christian standing which I have named and recommended. The question there is not, have you done *part* of what I commanded; but have you done *whatsoever* I commanded. Not, have you observed the rules which concern external morals, but have you observed *all* the rules of Christ's gospel; and surely you would not think of omitting amongst these, those rules respecting the inner man, and the conduct and discipline of the soul, which are, in fact, the most peculiar and positive of the whole.

So that the expression is not so confined and limited as might be supposed; but perhaps is as extensive as could be chosen. It sets us, in one word, upon inqui-

ry, not only concerning our duties to man, but to God; not only concerning our actions, but our principles and motives; not only concerning the decent regularity of our deportment, but the spiritual state and exercises of our mind.

Thus, then, we find an answer to the question we were asking, How shall a man know that he is a Christian?—He may know it by finding that *he does whatsoever his Lord commands him*. Let him studiously and faithfully look at himself, and inquire how far his dispositions, feelings, tastes, principles, and mode of life, are regulated by the requirements and spirit of the gospel. Let him examine how far the love of God reigns within him; how far the love of his neighbour directs his conduct toward him; how far he maintains a proper watch and government and control over his passions, propensities, and desires; particularly, how far he possesses that peculiar spirit of benevolence, meekness, forbearance, and humility, which so distinguished the character of his Lord and Master. He may be sure, that so far as in these things he goes according to the commands of Christ, just so far he is a Christian; and so far as he is deficient in any of these, just so far he is no Christian.

I am confidently persuaded, that every other test than this, is deceitful and inadequate. We may judge ourselves by any other standard, and only be led astray. But if we try ourselves by this, we cannot fail to know ourselves, except we be wilfully blind. When we find that we have the dispositions and character of disciples, we may be satisfied that we *are* disciples; but without them, all faith, and knowledge, and zeal, afford not the smallest satisfaction under heaven. This is no question of certain opinions and doctrines, and forms, and observances; but of spirit and holiness:—*if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his:—without holiness no man shall see the Lord*. Neither is it a question, by what process we obtained this character, or whether we can remember its commencement, and detail its progress. The only important

question is, do we possess it? Every other inquiry is swallowed up in this. For we might repeat the truest stories of once-experienced raptures, and remove mountains by our faith, and overcome kingdoms by our zeal; and yet, if we be not "formed after God, in righteousness and true holiness," we should be much nearer the school of the Pharisees than that of Christ.

In regard to this subject, we have a most important and solemn duty of self-examination; an examination which relates to nothing else than our personal claims to share the name of Christ, and the hope and prospect of our souls for eternity. Of all questions which can come before us, there is none to be compared to this, in deep and awful interest; none, which it is of any consequence, comparatively speaking, that we should be in haste to settle. Let us, then, put away, for a moment, all indifference and levity, and try ourselves by the standard of Christ, and ascertain whether we be truly his disciples. The question is not whether we believe the Bible, whether we are Pagans, or Infidels. The answer to this is easy, and we are too ready to be satisfied with it. But it relates to our personal claims to the hopes and promises of the gospel. "There are," says a certain writer,* "two sorts of Christianity; the one opposed to infidelity, the other opposed to worldly-mindedness." Suppose that we have the first, and hate infidelity; yet what will that avail us, if we have not also the second, and hate worldly-mindedness? Of what use to put the Bible under our arm, and walk forward in the way of sin?—Of what use to possess the candle of the gospel, and boast of it, and yet put it under a bushel, and go about our deeds of darkness?

Upon this subject it is necessary to come home to ourselves, and meet the interrogation openly and fairly. It is simply, *Are we Christians?* not, were we born in a Christian land, and baptized in a Christian

* H. More's "Practical Piety."

church, and can we repeat a Christian creed ; not, have we the Bible in our houses, and do we attend public worship on the sabbath. Let us not suffer ourselves to be led away by any such evasions. But *Are we* CHRISTIANS—in deed, and in truth, at heart, in spirit, thoroughly, earnestly ? Do we receive from the scriptures of Jesus their holy teachings, and faithfully follow them in life, conversation, and temper ?

It can avail us nothing to temporize in this matter, and strive to stifle the conviction of our deficiencies. The state of things will not be changed by our refusing to see what it is. Better far that the inquiry should disturb us now, than that we should go sluggishly on, satisfied with our general standing and general name, till it is too late to recover ourselves. Let us then be honest, and know the truth. It can profit us nothing to have a name to live, while we are yet dead ; to walk with the followers of Christ, and yet not be numbered with his friends. This is the most dreadful of all delusions—the more dreadful, because voluntary. God grant, therefore, that by a timely knowledge of ourselves on earth, we may escape the shame and horror, at the last day, of seeing ourselves in our true characters, for the first time ; and of discovering, that, although we have been all our lives long, crying out “Lord, Lord ;” yet we must be rejected as strangers, because *we have not done the will of our Father who is in heaven.*

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